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# **MY SPORTING MEMORIES**



THE  
LAW OF  
CONTRACTS



*Frantsisovic.*

A TIGER CROSSING A STREAM IN THE CENTRE OF A RING OF ELEPHANTS.

*Photo. Herzog and Higgins, Alton, C.I.*

# MY SPORTING MEMORIES.

FORTY YEARS WITH  
NOTE-BOOK & GUN. BY  
MAJOR-GENERAL NIGEL  
WOODYATT, C.B., C.I.E.  
WITH 24 ILLUSTRATIONS

HERBERT JENKINS LIMITED  
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SK235  
W6

TO MR  
A. JENKINS

*Printed in Great Britain at the Athenæum Printing Works, Redhill.*

THIS BOOK IS DEDICATED  
TO  
OUR SON NIGEL  
THAN WHOM NO KEENER OR BETTER SPORTS-  
MAN EVER STEPPED. FATE DECREED HIS  
SHORT SPAN OF LIFE SHOULD END AT  
TWENTY FIVE YEARS, BUT WE FEEL,  
AND LOVE TO FEEL, THAT HAD  
HE ONLY SURVIVED THE GREAT  
WAR HE MIGHT HAVE BECOME  
A BAYARD IN THE REALM  
OF SPORT.

*September, 1922.*



## CONTENTS

CHAPT.	PAGE
I. TIGER-SLAYERS I HAVE MET .. ..	II
II. THE PSYCHOLOGY OF THE TIGER .. ..	25
III. HOW A TIGER KILLS .. ..	34
IV. HUNTING THE TIGER .. ..	46
V. SOME TIGER STORIES .. ..	60
VI. BEATING FOR TIGER WITH ELEPHANTS ..	75
VII. SITTING UP FOR TIGER .. ..	89
VIII. MAN-EATERS .. ..	102
IX. PANTHER (OR LEOPARD) .. ..	113
X. ON THE SUBJECT OF BEARS .. ..	129
XI. BUFFALO, BISON, YAK AND RHINO ..	143
XII. DEER AND ANTELOPE .. ..	152
XIII. WILD SHEEP, IBEX, AND MARK-HOR ..	166
XIV. THAR, GHORAL AND SARAO .. ..	180
XV. A YOUNGSTER'S EXPLOIT.. ..	191
XVI. SMALL GAME SHOOTING .. ..	207
XVII. MAINLY ABOUT WATERFOWL .. ..	223
XVIII. HIMALAYAN PHEASANTS .. ..	238
XIX. ELEPHANTS IN CAPTIVITY .. ..	245
XX. ANECDOTES OF ELEPHANTS .. ..	260
XXI. ELEPHANTS IN THE WILD .. ..	275
XXII. HINTS TO YOUNG SPORTSMEN .. ..	291
INDEX .. ..	313



## ILLUSTRATIONS

**I** REPRODUCE some excellent pictures of tiger-shooting incidents, some of which were given me by my friend Sir Baber Shum Shere\*, and others by Lt.-General Sir John Goodwin and Mrs. Jack Lowis. Many of them will I feel be considered quite remarkable.

His Majesty King George has very graciously permitted me to publish those which concern himself.

The wonderful one day's bag of seven tiger, two bear, and two rhino was made by His Majesty the King and party on 20th December, 1911, in the Chitawan Valley of the Nepal Tarai. Of the tiger, King George got five, and Sir Colin Keppel and Captain Godfrey Faussett one each. The two rhino were killed by the King and the Duke of Teck. The couple of bear by Sir Horace Smith-Dorrien and Captain Godfrey Faussett.

The beautiful photograph of a tiger crossing a stream, and the companion picture of the same animal lying wounded in the water, depict an incident in the same shoot. This animal was one of the first two tiger shot (18th December, 1911) by His Majesty in Nepal.

King George arrived in the Nepalese Tarai on the 18th December, and killed two tiger on that date. With the exception of Sunday the 24th, His Majesty shot every day,

\* General Sir Baber Shum Shere Jung, G.B.E., K.C.S.I., K.C.I.E., the second son of the Ruler of Nepal.

leaving for Calcutta on the evening of the 28th December. The total bag of King George and his suite was, tiger, 39 ; rhino, 18 ; bear, 4 ; barking deer, 1.

A TIGER CROSSING A STREAM IN THE CENTRE OF A RING  
OF ELEPHANTS .. .. . *Frontispiece.*

FACING PAGE

KING GEORGE AND SIR CHANDRA SHUM SHER, RULER OF  
NEPAL, DECEMBER, 1911 .. .. . 14

THE BAG ON DECEMBER 20TH, 1911, DURING KING GEORGE'S  
SHOOT IN NEPAL—SEVEN TIGER, TWO RHINO AND  
TWO BEAR .. .. . 20

THE LOWIS TIGER CUBS :—

(1) ONE MONTH OLD .. .. . 32

(2) TWO MONTHS OLD .. .. . 32

(3) FOUR MONTHS OLD .. .. . 34

(4) SIX MONTHS OLD—JACK AND MRS. LOWIS IN  
ATTENDANCE .. .. . 34

(5) JACK LOWIS WITH MOTI AND MINAT WHEN JUST  
OVER SIX MONTHS OLD .. .. . 40

KING GEORGE IN HIS HOWDAH EMERGING FROM HEAVY  
" NARKAT " IN NEPAL .. .. . 56

THE ELEPHANT RING CLOSED IN ON A BADLY WOUNDED TIGER 58

TWO TIGERS CHARGING A RING OF ELEPHANTS .. .. 60

A TIGER BREAKING COVERT AND ABOUT TO CHARGE .. 66

A MAGNIFICENT BETTIAH TIGER .. .. . 70

A WOUNDED TIGER MAULING AN ELEPHANT .. .. 78

BETTIAH SHIKAR ELEPHANTS CROSSING THE GANDAK RIVER 128

A BISON SHOT BY SIR JOHN GOODWIN .. .. . 144

NEPALESE SHIKARIS SKINNING A DEAD RHINOSCEROS 148

THE PRINCE OF WALES'S FIRST TIGER IN NEPAL .. 150

A CHEETAH, TWO LYNX, AND THREE HOODED HAWKS .. 164

TWO BUCK MAR-KHOR WITH HORNS INTERLOCKED 172

KING GEORGE MOUNTING HIS SHIKAR ELEPHANT .. .. 274

A LARGE TUSKER ALONGSIDE AN ORDINARY-SIZED FEMALE 274

SIR JOHN GOODWIN PAYING HIS BEATERS .. .. . 310

# MY SPORTING MEMORIES

## CHAPTER I

### TIGER SLAYERS I HAVE MET

“**W**HAT a selfish old swine he must be.”

By these words I once unintentionally disconcerted a celebrated tiger-slayer of the Indian Civil Service. He was renowned throughout the whole of the United Provinces of India for his selfishness about tiger, and no one was more disgusted about this than the officers of his own splendid service. The circumstances were these.

We were staying with my wife's father\* (himself in the I.C.S.) when he was Magistrate of Saharanpore. I had been out in camp by myself snipe-shooting, and arrived back that evening just in time to change for dinner. My servant told me there was a large dinner party, but could not give me any of the guests' names.

I got to the drawing-room only as the people were filing in to dinner. I had therefore no opportunity of being introduced to anyone. I noted a good many youngsters of the civil service, and saw the back of a tall white-haired man bringing up the rear with Mrs. Patterson.

When dinner was over and the ladies had gone, I found

\* The late A. B. Patterson, C.I.E., Commissioner of Inland Revenue.



myself sitting at the bottom of a long table with Patterson at the other end. Presently he called out,

"What do you think of that, Nigel? Mr. — has shot over a hundred tiger to his own rifle."

I had heard of Mr. —, but had never seen him. Without the faintest idea that he was present at the table, I shouted back,

"What a selfish old swine he must be."

My father-in-law nearly choked. I myself was covered with confusion when I realised the situation, as I could not fail to do by the dead silence that followed. There was also a delighted expression on the faces of some half a dozen young civilians, who sat sipping their wine.

As for Mr. —, he stroked a long white beard, and looked ferociously in my direction. I spent the rest of the evening avoiding the neighbourhood of this tiger-slayer, and receiving the congratulations of the youthful members of his service. Not one of them would believe that I had not done it on purpose!

As I look back upon my forty years of shooting, the sportsmen I recall most vividly are those who were unselfish. To my mind selfishness and sportsmanship are a contradiction of terms.

I do not know if that particular record tiger-slayer had shot the "record tiger"; but quite a lot of fellows seem to have done so. There has been always much discussion over what are termed "record tiger," and at times a good deal of exaggeration. Many noted sportsmen of the old days have vouched for tiger of twelve feet and over, measured where they fell. These were men, too, whose word none would dream of doubting, and men of the very widest experience.

In days gone by, when weapons were much inferior, shooting less common and facilities for transport, movement, etc., much more restricted, it is conceivable that members of the feline tribe of such an enormous length did

exist ; for tiger live to a great age.\* Seventy or eighty years ago they had much more chance of living !

As things are now, and have been for some years, I am inclined to think that in a great many cases the measuring of tiger recorded as ten feet or over, has been at fault. The manner of measurement is seldom mentioned.

The usual and natural way to measure a tiger is to lay the beast flat on its side, stretch it out, run a steel tape from the tip of its nose, between its ears, to the end of its tail, following as closely as possible the curves of the body.

The ideal way is to pull the animal on to its back, press down the head and stretch the tail. Then drive in a peg at its nose, and another at the tip of its tail. The tiger having been removed, the measurement between the pegs will give you the correct length.

The measurement taken by the first method is the one usually recorded. Sometimes the second method is employed, and occasionally both lengths are given. Measuring over the curves of the body might make an increase of some three or four inches in a medium-sized tiger, and proportionately more in a very big one.

It makes a good deal of difference what sort of tape is used (*i.e.*, steel or other, old or new, repaired or whole, etc). Also whether the measurement is taken generously along all curves, or very strictly. I say *generously* because I have known cases of an exceptionally big tiger, where there was a sympathetic tendency *not* to make the length an inch too short !

The second method (between pegs) is the better one. Unfortunately it is not the adopted *rule*, and this leads to a good deal of confusion in records. Some noted sportsmen

\* Jungle folk are not scientific observers, but they say you can tell a tiger's age by the lobes in its liver. These are ordinarily six to eight in a full grown tiger. Almost toothless tigers have been shot. One I mention amongst man-eaters. Another was shot by Sir John Hewett's daughter (Mrs. Atkinson) in the Patli Dun (United Provinces).

object to it (e.g., Sir John Hewett\*), because in the jungle, they say you can so seldom find a suitable level piece of ground on which to stretch out a tiger. There is something in this argument.

A dead tiger may weigh anything you like from 350 to 500 lbs., and stand three to three and a half feet at the shoulder, with a girth behind it of from forty to fifty-five inches. There was much talk of a tiger which weighed 700 lbs., and stood four feet high. I can hardly credit it.

A huge beast like this is not easy to pick up and move about, in the hopes of finding a nice flat piece of ground. Nor can you delay too long, or *rigor mortis* will set in. Therefore it is not difficult to understand the inclination towards the first method of measurement.

Certain localities are noted for their big tiger. The lighter the forest the smaller the tiger. I never saw a very long tiger in the Sawaliks (low hills below the Himalayas, in the U.P.), but they were usually very sturdy thick-set fellows.

I was once lucky enough to be able to lay claim to a tiger over ten feet. I have with me still the vision of the animal's first appearance. As it came out of the grass I thought for a flash it was a case of two tiger in prolongation.

As a matter of fact experienced sportsmen measured it. I was told the method was between pegs. I have described the incident elsewhere, and I explain why I was not present at the actual measurement.

A sequel to this incident is interesting, especially as bringing home to one the evident fallacy of a great many present-day measurements.

I was lunching with Sir John Hewett about a week later, at Delhi, when he was President of the Coronation Durbar Committee (1911), and the following conversation took place :—

\* Sir John Hewett, G.C.S.I., K.B.E., etc., late Lieut.-Governor of the United Provinces.



*Photo, Herzog and Huggins, Mhow, C.I.*

KING GEORGE AND SIR CHANDRA SHUM SHER, RULER OF NEPAL, DECEMBER, 1911.

*Triforce Page 5.*



*Sir John* : " I hear you got a big tiger last week, Wood-yatt ? "

*Self* : " Yes sir, a very good one. It measured 10.2. "

*Sir John* (in his most urbane manner) : " Ah, well ! I have seen one hundred and forty-nine dead tiger measured, and only five of them were ten feet or over. I wonder how it was measured ? "

*Self* : " By experienced men, but I was not myself present, etc., etc. "

At the luncheon table was John Broun, I.C.S., then, I think Commissioner of the Meerut civil division. John was a great tiger-slayer. He has probably shot a hundred. Our host appealed to him for his opinion. To my astonishment Broun said that out of all the tiger he had shot, not one measured ten feet. I am not at all sure he did not say that he had never *seen* one of that length shot by any one. I believe most of his shooting was in light jungle.

Sir John Hewett has since then seen nearly one hundred more tiger killed (his daughter Mrs. Atkinson, has shot eleven), but not another of ten feet or over.

Of the great number of tiger shot in the Bettiah jungles there was only one bigger than mine, and that was shot by a planter named Dixon a year later. The biggest\* tiger I know of, personally, was shot by Sir Bindon Blood in Nepal, and is recorded as 10' 8"—an old friend of mine (Sir John Campbell, late Indian Civil Service), who gives me this measurement was present. He adds that the biggest tiger, all round, that he ever saw dead (he has been at the death of nearly two hundred) measured 10 feet 4½ inches.

A tigress is not as big as a tiger. I have never seen one that I estimated as over nine feet. Sir John Hewett saw the late Swan Kennard of the 15th Hussars kill one measuring 9 feet 6 inches. This is very unusual. Sir John adds that he never saw another over 9 feet 3 inches, and that the

\* Rowland Ward admits an eleven foot tiger slain by the Maharajah of Datia.

biggest tigress he ever shot himself was 9 feet 2 inches. The tigress I shot through the lungs as recorded on page 63, though she looked quite big, measured only 8 feet 6 inches.

In short, one may truly say that tigresses of nine feet and over are, like tigers of ten feet and over, extremely rare.

If the young sportsman shoots a tiger which measures 9 feet 3 inches between pegs, as I have described, he should be more than satisfied. If he kills one three inches longer, measured in the same way, he has shot a whopper.

The first *tiger-slayer* I ever met, and he was a mighty hunter, was the late Sir Henry Ramsay, the "King of Kumaon." I do not think he knew how many tiger he had shot. Probably several hundreds, and he never sat up for a tiger, if he could help it.

I only wish I could remember all he told me about tiger. In those days I had not acquired the excellent habit of recording interesting conversations, as I did (for some years) later on. I recollect one incident he related, however, which much impressed him, as it did me.

One evening, when on tour, it was most necessary for Sir Henry to press on to the next stage, although an ordinary stage had already been completed. He generally walked his hill marches at that time. He was on the point of starting off alone, ahead of his coolies, about 6 p.m., when an express runner brought him an urgent communication.

The "King" was rather annoyed, but he had to sit down and indite an answer. As he was doing so a second messenger arrived with a letter which required an immediate reply. Sir Henry then postponed his move until next morning.

Next day, as he was leaving the bungalow, a villager came in to say a tiger had killed one of his cows the night before about 6 p.m., and right on the main path.

Sir Henry went to investigate. Two miles from the staging bungalow he had just left, and on the way to his

destination were the remains of a big cow lying on the road itself. Sir Henry always maintained that it was a special dispensation of Providence. Had he gone on alone the night before, as he had intended, he would have walked right on to the tiger and been killed.

Next came the late Herky Ross whom I mention so often in these pages. I first met him in the little hill station of Almora, and I was asked later to his camps in the Kumaon Tarai. Herky had shot much big and other game, and must have killed a great number of tiger.

In the latter part of his service he seemed to have rather tired of them. One day he astonished me a good deal by saying he would sooner shoot a sambar (Rusa deer) with a good head, than a tiger.

I think the long waits in the hot sun bored him. He may have been getting lazy, for he infinitely preferred sitting up at evening in a machan, accompanied by one of his two daughters,\* than beating in line.

Few men now living have seen as many tiger shot as Sir John Hewett, who was Lieutenant-Governor of the United Provinces before Lord Meston. The number is very close on two hundred and fifty, and in localities so wide apart as Assam, Central Provinces, Nepal and the United Provinces.

I have a vivid recollection of his efforts, in the early part of this century, to get better provision made for the preservation of game in India. Also what a very active interest he took in the new rules framed for the protection of wild birds and animals in his own huge territory.

Some sportsmen cavilled a good deal at the very necessary restrictions proposed, but indiscriminate slaughter was being carried on to such an extent in certain districts that the diminution of game was most marked.

Time has shown that Sir John was right. The restrictions eventually imposed were very reasonable. Local

\* Now respectively Lady Mackenzie and Mrs. John Pemberton.



governments were authorised to apply the provisions regarding close seasons, etc., as they thought fit, and game generally has been on the increase since that time. In fact no more requisite law was ever passed than the Indian Game Protection Act, which received the assent of the Governor-General on 18th September, 1912.

During the time Sir John Hewett was Lieutenant-Governor he held an annual shoot, with seven or eight guns in camp. These gatherings, which extended over a period of six or seven seasons, accounted for over one hundred and fifty tiger.

There was nothing of "the selfish old swine" about Sir John. I have often heard ill-conditioned people assert that the Lieutenant-Governor was taking all the shooting for himself. The best answer to that is the fact that, of the number given, more than half the tiger were killed by captains or subalterns. That is to say, by young sportsmen who otherwise would have found it difficult to make arrangements for bagging a tiger at all, for in those jungles, to have any chance of success, you required a large number of elephants for beating.

Another fact that also speaks for itself is, that out of the two hundred and fifty tiger at whose death Sir John Hewett has been present, only about forty have fallen to his own rifle. My old friend Campbell describes him well as "The best of hosts and most unselfish of sportsmen."

The five tiger over ten feet in length which, as I have already said, Sir John saw killed, were shot by the following sportsmen :—

S. L. Whympers, 10 feet 5½ inches.

A. E. Ward, 10 feet 4 inches.

Ramsay Gordon, 10 feet 4 inches.

Sir John Hewett, 10 feet 2½ inches.

Sir John Hewett, 10 feet 2 inches.

General Sir Bindon Blood, whose Indian career came to an end in the same high appointment that Sir William Bird-

wood now holds (*i.e.*, G.O.G. Northern Command), has shot a great deal in various parts of India. He is credited with a very large tiger of 10 feet 8 inches, shot in Nepal.

Sir Bindon was a very keen and enthusiastic sportsman. He was justly renowned for excellent judgment in all that pertains to the *bandobast*\* for slaying dangerous game, and his plans seldom went wrong.

He has been at the death of over 150 tiger, of which 52 have fallen to his own rifle. As for panther, he must have seen a couple of hundred killed, and a great number of these he shot himself. He made the killing of panther almost a speciality. His imperturbability and foresight helped him to circumvent them with ease, where other men failed. When Bindon went out after a panther, it was about 4 to 1 on Bindon !

Mr. S. L. Whympers, of the Naini-Tal Brewery, besides being A1 with his shot-gun, was pretty useful with his rifle. In his time he has brought off two (if not three) "right and left" at tiger. I mean with both animals in view simultaneously, and without reloading his rifle.

Sir John Campbell talks of him as the best small game shot he has ever been out with, and a most reliable rifle shot. He was once with Whympers shooting the celebrated Dhanari jheels for snipe. In windy weather and with wild snipe Whympers had a *daily* average, for nine days, of two cartridges for one snipe. When shooting quail Campbell saw him *gather* (a very different thing to *downing*, when walking through thick grass) 58 quail for 61 cartridges, and again 31 for 32. This would surely have satisfied old Hawker† himself.

\* An Indian word for good arrangements for whatever business is on hand; the arrangements being perfected by intelligent anticipation.

† Lieut.-Col. Peter Hawker, author of *Instructions to Young Sportsmen in All that Relates to Shooting* (Jenkins), Mr. Eric Parker, of *The Field*, describes him as the best shot of his own or any other day.

A great hand at dealing with tiger was the late Colonel G. C. Ellis, Royal Engineers. He had shot big game all over the world, from the Rocky Mountains to Nepal. It was in the latter kingdom that he achieved his most notable success about twenty years ago.

The pass was for a fortnight, and granted to the late Sir Baker Russell, but Ellis ran the shoot. Twenty-three tiger were bagged in that short period, besides other game. It was in this shoot that the guns *in the beat* arrived at the "stops" with eight full grown tiger killed. The stops heard the firing, but thought the line were shooting hog-deer ! It was a case of an *alluring* tigress. She escaped them, but helped the party to three more tiger in the same nullah a few days later.

Sir John Campbell, who has seen nearly two hundred tiger killed, will tell you he is not a fine shot. That one hears only of his good days, and not of the bad ones. That birds and beasts *will* "fly into the pattern at times !"

Be that as it may, he has killed at least sixty tiger of those he has seen laid low. He once got three tiger in three shots in rather over three minutes. Two were shot in the neck and one in the forehead, and none of the three required a second shot.

This speaks well enough, alike for his shooting prowess and his nerve. I have much to say about him in these pages, for he was one of those wonderful sportsmen of the Indian Civil Service, who, besides letting very little escape him, was always really kind and helpful to others about shooting. As regards tiger, he knew their "ways" inside out, as well as the idiosyncrasies of other wild beasts and birds.

I have seen him shooting wild snipe in a wind, and he let very few off. In the hills, besides being a great walker, he was as quick as lightning in downing any species of pheasant. Those who know that kind of shooting will understand.



To face page 10

Photo, Hersey and Higgins, Menz, C.I.

**THE BAG ON DECEMBER 20, 1911, DURING KING GEORGE'S SHOOT IN NEPAL—SEVEN TIGER, TWO RHINO AND TWO BEAR.**



The name of the late Jack Lowis, the manager of the Bettiah raj, occurs very often in this book. I do not know how many tiger he shot himself. A very small proportion to the number he saw, because all the years he spent in the Bettiah jungles were devoted to giving pleasure to others. He was a prince of sportsmen—the word “selfish” was unknown to him.

As he was originally an indigo planter, and much beloved in Bihar, he held it as a sort of creed that it was his duty to introduce all his old planter-friends in turn to a tiger. However, to vary the guests at his shoots, an I.C.S. official, and a soldier-man like myself were included in the party.

Jack never put himself as a “stop” so as to get the best chance of killing the tiger with his own rifle. He was always in the beat, and nearly every tiger I saw him bag himself, was bowled over by a great shot after someone else had missed it.

John Broun (still another member of the I.C.S.) shot, as I have already said, a great number of tiger during his Indian career. He has as good tiger and other sporting trophies as anyone I have met. I remember a photograph of him surrounded by such an extensive assortment of mementoes of the chase, as to appear like one of those picture puzzles, “Find the hunter.”

Many sportsmen as well as their wives, have reason to be grateful to the Brouns for much splendid hospitality.

It has become almost an axiom never to shoot tiger on foot. Colonel Joe Nuttall, however, did so and with a muzzle-loader. He was much before my time so I never met him, but I did know Boucher of the Hampshires at Bareilly in the eighties.

This officer much preferred hunting tiger on foot to any other method, and was most successful. He travelled very light, made all his own arrangements, and just took out with him a local shikari. I feel that his satisfaction after every tiger killed must have been immense.

He retired early from the service, and became governor of a gaol in England. Joining up for the great war he came out to India and commanded a garrison battalion. I met him when I was Inspector of infantry, and reminded him of his early proclivity for chasing tiger on foot.

I referred particularly to a remark I heard one evening, at the club at Bareilly, during a discussion on Boucher's prowess. It was made by a senior officer noted for his somewhat pessimistic nature, and simply consisted of the words :

"It is only a matter of time. Eventually a tiger will kill Boucher !"

But Boucher was not to be deterred. He went on and slew more, was never touched and lived to put lots of ginger into that garrison battalion nearly thirty years later. The remark of the despondent colonel at Bareilly made me wonder for the first time, whether as a nation we are not in danger, at times, of getting "soft."

A. P. Davis (commonly called "Squire" Davis) was a chip of the same block as Boucher. Once a tea-planter at Tilwari in Garhwal, he did so much shooting that he was generally referred to as "Squire Davis, the *shikari* erstwhile tea-planter."

One tiger which he got in the hills of Garhwal, after endeavouring to compass its destruction for many months, he was quite sorry to shoot. They had met so often that they had become almost friends. However, the tiger, not trusting Davis much, carefully avoided undue exposure for a long time. Eventually the "Squire" circumvented it.

Lieutenant-Colonel A. E. Ward, of Kashmir fame, is still I believe in charge of the State Preserves of the Maharajah of Jammu and Kashmir. His name is a household word among Indian sportsmen. Besides being a mighty hunter himself, his knowledge of game is so great, and his personality so charming, that no one can talk to him without being captivated as well as instructed.

I do not know how many tiger Colonel Ward has seen killed, but the number must be very large. Besides tiger, I may truly say this grand old sportsman has shot *everything*. No book of sporting records can be opened without seeing his name continually. His list of trophies must be prodigious, and many of his best "heads" have seldom been equalled.

There are many Indian Princes and Indian gentlemen who have shot a lot of tiger, and are good sportsmen. The first I met was the late Rumbir Singh, commonly called "the Dehra Dun Rajah." I mention him on another page as having done me out of a good swamp deer. He was a magnificent shot, and very quick. The extraordinary thing was, that he could not shoot for nuts until he had consumed half a tumbler of brandy, with a very little water added. He did not live to a great age !

The late Rajah of Chamba was a keen shot, and did a great deal for the preservation of game in his own territory. He had an excellent system of intelligence, to which he owed much of his success. On hearing immediately about the depredations of, say, a black bear amongst the crops of some village, thirty or forty miles distant, he would be on the spot in two or three hours. This gave great confidence to his people, by whom he was much beloved.

Mangal Khan and Wazir Khan in the United Provinces are two Indian gentlemen who are very fine sportsmen, and whose main idea in life is tiger-shooting. Each of them told Sir John Campbell many years ago that he had been at the death of over 600 tiger. Only last winter Mangal Khan met Sir John Hewett in India, and it transpired in conversation, that the number of tiger he had seen killed then exceeded 900. What a very little about tiger there must be which Mangal Khan does not know !

His ancestral home (he is a big landholder) is in Pilibhit in the U.P., and the name he gave it is Sherpur (tiger town). A grand sportsman he is too. He has been known



to clap his hands in order to turn a tiger to some other stop, instead of firing at it himself.

Wazir Khan is of humbler origin, but a member of that rare creation, "one of nature's gentlemen." He started life as a mahout, and now lives for tiger. He knows the Kumaon Tarai by heart. Every bit of forest, the twist and turn of each stream, and almost every tree. What a book to read, if he could only be induced to write his reminiscences.

## CHAPTER II

### THE PSYCHOLOGY OF THE TIGER

**I**T is naturally the ambition of every sportsman going to India to shoot a tiger.

It does not come to everyone, however, to be sent to a station where, near at hand, tiger may be found. Indeed, an officer may never be located in a tiger area at all. Neither may he get the opportunity of joining an experienced party with elephants.

Still, given the will, any sportsman should be able to get his chance of bagging a tiger by procuring a permit for a likely block in a reserved forest known to locate carnivora, *e.g.*, the Central Provinces, Kumaon Tarai, etc.

As a rule, every help is given by the civil officials from whom, speaking personally, I have always received the greatest kindness, hospitality and assistance. Of course there are exceptions, but I was fortunate enough never to come across one in actual connection with a shoot.

Natives are very fond of telling you that there is no *thikana* (certainty) about a tiger. That is to say, not only may it never do the same thing twice, but also you are never quite certain what it *will* do. There is a great deal in this, and up to a certain point it is very true. At the same time experience, commonsense, and some cunning

on the sportsman's part will help him on many an occasion to circumvent members of the feline tribe.

When I say natives I do not refer to experienced shikaris. These men often are not available when you want them. They are few and far between. The best I ever met was a Mohammedan called Samander, who lived near Saharanpur in the United Provinces. He had a wonderful testimonial (in India called a *chit*) from a well-known member of the Indian Civil Service, by name Macpherson, who had killed his hundred tiger and more. I remember when reading it being much struck by the last sentence, which ran somewhat as follows :—

“ In conclusion let me say, that any Britisher who goes out with Samander, *be he whom he may*, will probably find that in a tight place Samander is a braver man than himself.”

I believe it to be quite true. When I knew Samander he was between fifty and sixty years of age, but as hard and plucky as ever, though a bit stiff in the joints.

Even fairly good shikaris will assert (a) that a tiger never kills more than one animal at a time, (b) will never charge unless wounded, (c) will seldom return to a kill from which it has been disturbed, etc. Yet all these I have known it do and will refer to them in due course. This inconsistency appears to uphold the statement of the ordinary native, that there is no *thikana* about a tiger.

Let us take some characteristics of the tiger after it has killed.

I refer especially to such matters as what line it is likely to take if disturbed. This is dealt with elsewhere. Then there are the questions of where it is likely to be located ; when it may be expected to return to its kill ; how and by what route it will probably approach the carrion ; what stratagem can be exercised to allay its suspicions, etc.

After a tiger has killed, perhaps drunk its victim's blood from the jugular vein, eaten what it wants to, and moved the "kill," or left it where it was, the animal invariably lies up fairly close to the remains. In hot weather it will be in or near water, indeed a swamp is a favourite spot at any season. Shade also is welcome. The "kill" may or may not be dragged or carried to the shade or water. Most probably not, though a tiger's usual practice, speaking generally, is to hide it somewhere from his enemy man, and also prevent it being devoured by vultures while the slayer rests and slumbers.

Some of the feline tribe carry this precaution to the extreme, while others are quite casual. You will sometimes find the carcass almost in the open, but as a rule the tiger has then been disturbed. Again you will find the remains dragged into the densest bush. I have even found them most carefully covered over with leaves and grass.

It will be noted, therefore, that as regards the tiger's methods of dealing with the "kill," there is no *thikana*. Once having located it, however, a good look round should give you a very good idea of where the marauder is lying up.

As regards its return for another meal, it all depends on how you are hunting it, whether this affects your plan of action or not. If you are going to drive the tiger by beaters, or a line of elephants, you go in the middle of the day when the animal is resting. If you are going to sit up for the beast to return, it is again very much a case of no *thikana*.

I have sat up dozens of times, and although sportsmen will be told that tiger do not usually return during daylight, I have often known them do so, just before dusk. It depends very much on the tiger; on when it killed; when it had its last meal, and whether it was disturbed or no; on how much has been eaten; whether the locality is quiet with plenty of cover; on what sort of a feeder

the tiger is ; on whether it has heard you, or seen you and got suspicious, etc.

Here cunning will help. Having approached the place as quietly as possible, with no talking by anyone, and when your seat, or pit, or *machan*\* is ready, carefully conceal yourself in it. Then, under directions you have given beforehand, your men will collect, and go right away talking hard for half a mile or so, and doing a lot of coughing. The animal being almost certainly in the near vicinity will hear them, and emboldened by the apparent departure of its inveterate enemy, man, it will possibly approach the kill in quite a short space of time. I have found this method particularly efficacious with panther.

And how will it approach ? For the fourth time there is absolutely no *thikana*. The tiger may come right along in the open roaring when at a distance, but he will never come close like that. It is much more likely to steal up an adjacent ravine, and the first thing you may know of its presence, bar the flight of all birds and the extraordinary stillness, is a something changed in the look of some bushes in front of you. You see a rock you had not noticed before. No ! it is a tiger's head, is it not ? Yes, suddenly you plainly realise that is exactly what it is, and slowly you raise your rifle.

As a matter of fact the ways in which a tiger or leopard approaches its kill are multiform. You need to be ready for anything. You generally get an indication by the peculiar stillness I have referred to, and the flight of the vultures from the carrion. Peafowl and monkeys, too, may give the beast's presence away by cries and chattering.

The after stillness is very marked, almost uncanny.

\* A seat usually made up out of a native bed, and fixed into a tree, or on four high poles. The Central India Horse used to have a particularly good contrivance, made locally, which was in the form of a strong camp stool with ropes which could be affixed to a tree, even if there were no branches, in a very short space of time.

Once when I was sitting up for a tiger a jackal approached the kill, almost touched it, then backed away showing its teeth, repeating this performance several times. Finally it walked off with chagrin, biting twigs of bushes on its way, and shaking its head furiously in its rage and disappointment. It dare not touch the putrid flesh when it knew the killer was near at hand. It was most interesting to watch.

The first leopard I shot (over a dead cow) came very quietly with much dignity. A few days later I expected the same sort of thing at a tiger kill. This we had dragged out of a deep ravine and placed on the edge of it, about twenty yards from my *machan*. We omitted to secure this kill to a stump or bush. The tigress came just before dark. Whether she spotted me or not I do not know, but the first I saw of her was a long thin striped body drawn up like a caterpillar about to move. She got her jaws quickly into the carcass, and in a flash had drawn it into the ravine. Very taken aback I fired hurriedly, and missed.

As it was now getting dark, and of no use waiting longer, I got down, and walked back some two miles to camp. An hour after arrival the elephants set up a great commotion. The mahouts said there was a tiger about, upsetting them. The next morning trackers found she had followed me all the way back to camp. Luckily I did not know it!

My wife's father was sitting over a kill in a dry river-bed. Near the kill was a high, steep bank, and he elected to lie down well concealed on the edge of the bank with that excellent shikari I have already mentioned (Samander) behind him. The tiger came in broad daylight, and was seen round a bend about eighty yards away, where it stood still, roaring. This was very unusual. An angry tiger's roar, especially the low notes, when you are on foot in a quiet jungle and do not quite know what it all

means, is rather an intimidating sound. Patterson did not fire, as he expected the tiger to come to the kill. Instead of approaching nearer, however, it disappeared, still roaring. Half an hour passed, with the watchers at high tension, but no tiger.

Then Samander touched Patterson's leg. Patterson redoubled his vigilance, but could see nothing. Twice more his leg was touched, and then Patterson, turning his head round, saw to his amazement and consternation a big tiger standing about ten yards behind Samander, and *looking* at them! As Patterson said, "You can't perform such an acrobatic feat as to shoot at a tiger behind you when lying down." Moreover, any attempt to get up would have brought the tiger on top of them. There was nothing for it but to wait motionless for the tiger to move off and allow them to go home. This is exactly what they did!

A really marked characteristic of the tiger is the way it begins to eat the flesh of its prey. Were it not for this, it would be often impossible to decide whether a tiger or a leopard had killed. Of course if there are pug marks it is an easier matter, for those of the tiger are so much larger, but it is more often a case of nothing but dry leaves, or loose sand.

A tiger seldom (never to my knowledge) attacks the entrails, while a leopard always does. In every tiger "kill" I have seen, the meal has been commenced from the buttock end without damage to the entrails. I was once rather bothered by finding the carcass eaten at both shoulder *and* buttock, and we could find no pug marks anywhere. It turned out to be a tigress and two cubs.

I sat up once over a dead cow for what I thought was a large panther (leopard). It came about 8 p.m., and I had to wait for a rising moon. Meanwhile it made the most awful noise eating. It seemed to be revelling in the entrails, with its head inside the carcass. When the

moon came I could see its form plainly, and it looked enormous. Waiting until it got up for a fresh attack on its victim, I aimed low and fired. All was dead silence, and a cloud covering the moon I could see nothing. Lighting the lantern, I waited half an hour, and then got cautiously down. It was a big black bear, quite dead.

Tiger cubs are a very interesting study, and are frequently reared by hand. It is difficult to get an authoritative opinion as to the number a tigress usually gives birth to. Jungle men have often assured me it is normally six, and that the male tiger is invariably allowed to eat two, as a reward for his share in the transaction!

They will declare this is a fact time after time; adding that the tigress herself generally devours another. Be that as it may, both Jack Lowis and another friend of mine (Mr. A. M. Sutherland, C.I.E.) have unfortunately shot a tigress just about to be delivered, and in each case there were six cubs inside her.\* I have heard of many more similar instances. This seems to corroborate the jungle people, but instead of the tiger being called to a dainty set meal, it is more than probable it kills them as they get older if they play with their papa too much when he has a bit of a liver on him, or because they are in his way.

The reason so many people are sceptical about a tigress having more than three or four at birth is because one never *sees* more than that number with her. Personally I have never seen more than three, at times a few weeks old, and again quite big tiger. It is very pretty to watch the care the tigress takes of them. When being beaten out of jungle grass she will reconnoitre ahead to find the best way for them to escape. If it is a matter of a road

\* Sutherland wished to have his tigress stuffed and set up with the six cubs suckling her. Rowland Ward, however, wanted a hundred guineas for this work of art. As this was too much for Sutherland's pocket, he gave the little skins to some ladies instead.



to be crossed she will probably charge the advancing line of elephants, roaring for all she is worth, to enable her cubs to cross unnoticed in the hubbub.

As regards rearing cubs, Mr. and Mrs. Jack Lowis of Bettiah had a most delightful experience with three, and often told me they had never had such interesting pets. Jack shot a tigress in April, and then when they got down to "pad" her, one of the men found four little cubs only a few days old, with eyes unopen. They were put into a sack, but unfortunately before being lifted into the howdah an elephant trod on the corner of the sack, and killed one. The remaining three (one tigress and two males), were got safely home and given diluted milk until three foster-mothers, in the shape of she-goats, were found. One of the foster-mothers was very fond of her charge, and used to butt at Mrs. Lowis' spaniel "Drums" when he came near.

At first they did fairly well. Then the milk seemed to disagree with them, and they became scraggy, and broke out into sores, especially on the tips of the ears. As it was necessary to change the diet, the poor foster-mothers were utilised, and turned into raw meat! This meat was put through a mincing machine, and the cubs simply loved it. They thrived on it splendidly and grew apace, while their coats became beautifully glossy.

I am much indebted to Mrs. Lowis for allowing me to reproduce a series of pictures of these cubs from one to eight months old, and where the change produced by the raw minced meat diet is very marked.

Later they were given lumps of raw meat, which they used to swallow, spit up and re-eat, as is the way with the cat tribe. After eight months a German circus man turned up, and gave 2,500 rupees for them, being specially delighted at their tameness. Up to that age they had given no trouble, though the tigress Jinat (Moti and Minat



I.—One Month old. Jinat (tigress), Moti and Minat (males).



II.—Two Months old.

THE LOWIS TIGER CUBS. THESE THREE CUBS WERE CAUGHT ON APRIL 10, 1912,  
IN KERALI JUNGLE, BEFORE THEIR EYES WERE OPEN.



were the names of the males) was just beginning to get a little fractious at times.

I believe most people who have reared tiger cubs found them impossible to keep after a year, at the longest, because of the danger to others. At Muttra once, I found one, about ten months old, with a Major Spurrell of the 5th Lancers. I was inspecting the musketry of the regiment, and staying with the C.O., "Jabber Chisholm." Hearing Spurrell was down with enteric fever, I rode over to inquire.

As I was cantering up the drive with a loose seat, and when within about twenty paces of the verandah of the house, the pony stopped dead ; and I shot over his head ! Picking myself up, and looking round to see what had upset the pony, who was now pulling my arm off in frantic efforts to get away, there was not a soul about. Then round one of the verandah pillars, I saw the enormous head of a tiger ! It was not exactly loose, for it had on a collar with a heavy chain attached, but the latter was not fastened, only thrown over a beam in the verandah.

Chisholm told me the tiger was a great nuisance. When it was being exercised by two men one evening, it broke away as a lady was driving past in a pony cart, and sprang on to the pony's back, seizing the nape of the trapper's neck. Luckily it was pulled off before it had done any harm, but the shafts were broken, and the lady much frightened.

## CHAPTER III

### HOW A TIGER KILLS

**A** CHARACTERISTIC of the tiger, over which there has always been much disputation, is the method which both it and the leopard employ to kill their prey. As the most experienced sportsmen and acknowledged authorities differ on the subject, it is a very interesting one to discuss and on which to try and throw additional light.

G. P. Sanderson says\* :—"I have never witnessed a tiger actually seize its prey, but it has been described to me by men who have, scores of times.

"The general method is for the tiger to slink up under cover of bushes, or long grass, ahead of the cattle in the direction in which they are feeding, and to make a rush at the first cow or bullock that comes within five or six yards.

"The tiger does not spring upon his prey in the manner usually represented. Clutching the bullock's forequarters with his paws (one being generally over the shoulder), he seizes the throat in his jaws from underneath, and turns it upwards and over, sometimes springing to the far side in doing so, to throw the bullock over, and give the wrench which dislocates the neck. This is frequently

\* *Thirteen Years Amongst the Wild Beasts of India*, published 1878 (p. 277).



III.—Four Months old.



*To face page 34.*

IV.—Six Months old. Jack and Mrs. Lewis in attendance.

### THE LEWIS TIGER CUBS.



done so quickly that the tiger, if timid, is in retreat again almost before the herdsman can turn round."

Lydekker tells us\* :—"Cattle are killed generally by the tiger seizing their forequarters with his fore-paws, one of which is generally thrown across the animal's shoulders, while the throat is gripped from below by the jaws; a sudden upward wrench, during which the destroyer sometimes springs to the off-side of his victim, results in causing the dislocation of the neck of the latter.

"Occasionally cattle are seized by the neck, while it is possible that on rare occasions a blow from the powerful paw may be the immediate cause of death. Still more rarely large animals, such as gaur and buffalo, are hamstrung by tigers. In devouring its prey, a tiger invariably, or almost always, commences its meal on the flesh of the hindquarters."

Lydekker again, with reference to Sanderson's contention, writes† :—"The falsity of the popular idea that tiger spring upon their victims from a distance, and after killing them by a blow from one of the fore-paws, or by tearing at the throat with their claws, suck their blood, was demonstrated by Mr. G. P. Sanderson in his *Thirteen Years Among the Wild Beasts of India*. From the accounts of natives the same sportsman came to the conclusion that the tiger clutches the forequarters of the victim with its paws, one of which is generally thrown over the shoulder, while with its jaws it seizes the throat from below, and turns it upwards and over, so as to dislocate the vertebrae of the neck, sometimes giving additional weight to the wrench by jumping to the opposite side of the stricken animal.

"This explanation was for some time generally accepted, but in a communication to *The Asian*, July 12th, 1895, Mr. F. A. Shillingford raised objections to certain details

\* *Handbook to the Carnivora*, published 1896 (p. 56 et seq.).

† *Game Animals of India*, published 1907 (p. 301 et seq.).



of the attack as described by Mr. Sanderson. His observations are as follows :—

“ Tiger, as a rule, always roar when charging or fighting in self-defence, but there are exceptions to the rule. In the latter case it would happen that a very savage tiger in order to wreak his vengeance without fail on the intruders, lies low and attacks without warning. The well-known feint of an attack made by tiger to demoralise a line of beaters, and then effect an unchallenged retreat, is always accompanied by the loudest roar they can emit.

“ It seems almost impossible to picture a tiger seizing by the neck from below, without first closing with his victim. He must turn his neck round from below, and this can hardly be accomplished without the purchase of his claws on the shoulders, and this in my opinion is what occurs in the generality of cases.

“ There are instances in which you see fang marks both at the back and in front of the neck, but the former, I take it, is a mere preliminary grip of an obstreperous victim, quickly followed by the fatal clutch below. That the tiger always breaks the neck I do not believe. That the necks of animals, especially cows, are often broken may be due to the fall in the struggle, but the idea that tiger systematically set to wrenching their necks, appears untenable.”

It is a little difficult to understand the reasoning here. The assumption by Lydekker seems to be that Shillingford disagreed with Sanderson's description of the attack, asserting that the tiger must first close with its victim. This, as I read it, is exactly the meaning Sanderson intended to convey. These two authorities therefore seem to be in harmony on this subject.

J. D. Inverarity writes\* :—“ Opinions differ as to how a tiger seizes its prey, some alleging that it seizes by the throat, others by the back of the neck. My own view is

\* *The Encyclopædia of Sport.*

that they usually seize by the throat, and occasionally by the nape of the neck. In the latter case the kill is of small height, such for instance as a pig. I only once remember seeing a bullock that had been seized by the back of the neck.

"As might be expected the throat is not always seized with mathematical accuracy. The holes made by the fangs on one side may be found close under the ear, while on the other side the holes will be near the bottom of the jaw.

"Tiger occasionally attack powerful animals. I know an instance of an old solitary bull bison (the gaur) killed by one; and I shot a solitary old bull buffalo that a few days previously had had a tiger on his hindquarters; in this case the tiger's teeth had been fixed into the back near the tail; and the claws on each quarter."

"The tiger," says Captain Forsyth,\* "very seldom kills its prey by the 'sledge hammer stroke' of the forepaw, so often talked about, the usual way being to seize with the teeth by the nape of the neck, and at the same time use the paws to hold the victim and give a purchase for the wrench that dislocates the neck."

Captain Baldwin writes† :—"He launches himself upon his victim and seizing it by the back of the neck (not the throat) brings it to the ground, and then gives that fatal wrench or twist that dislocates the neck.... A tiger, as I have before stated, almost invariably seizes his prey by the back of the neck; leopards and panthers by the throat."

With reference to these two pronouncements, G. P. Sanderson, in his book beforementioned, says:—"With due respect for Captains Forsyth and Baldwin's opinions on sporting matters, I beg to differ with them entirely on this point. The tiger does occasionally seize by the

\* *Highlands of Central India* (p. 257).

† *Large and Small Game of Bengal*.

nape of the neck, in the case of having to deal with very powerful cattle, but I am convinced that this is not his usual method.... I imagine Captain Baldwin must be alone in his experience of finding wounds at the back of the neck."

F. W. Fletcher says\* :—" I have carefully examined the bodies of fifty cattle killed by tiger in Wynaad, and with a single exception, the fang marks have invariably been in the throat, not at the back of the neck."

Sir Samuel Baker writes† :—" The attack of a large tiger is terrific.... Springing with great velocity, and exerting its momentum at the instant that it seizes a bullock by the neck.

" It is supposed by the natives that the tiger....by fixing its teeth in the back of the neck at the first onset, continues its spring so as to pass over the animal attacked. This wrenches the neck suddenly round, and as the animal struggles the dislocation is easily effected."

Moray Brown, in *Shikar Sketches*, p. 195, quotes an article by a Lieutenant-Colonel Pierson, R.A., in the *Indian Sporting Magazine*. The incident occurred on 11th May, 1869, on the banks of the Pur Ganga in Berar.

" We crouched down, and had the luck to see the whole business...., the white cow (one of a herd of cattle) allowed the tigress to approach her within about eighty yards before she appeared to notice her danger.... The tigress increased her pace to a trot and then to a lumbering gallop ....the gallop turned into a charge, and in a few seconds the tigress had picked out a fine young cow on whose back she sprang, and they both rolled over in a heap.

" When the two animals were still again we could distinctly see the cow standing up with her neck embraced by the tigress, who was evidently sucking her jugular ;

\* *Sport in the Nilgiris* (p. 137).

† *Wild Beasts and Their Ways* (p. 92).

the cow made a few feeble efforts to release herself, which the tigress resented by breaking her neck."

On page 200 of his *Sketches*, the same author says:—"The neck is seized in the powerful jaws and bent back until it is dislocated.... I have invariably found the fang marks in the neck."

The nine opinions quoted are those of men whose names were household words among sportsmen of the past. Sanderson's book published in 1878, Shillingford's communication of 1895, Lydekker's *Handbook* of 1896, Fletcher's Nilgiri experiences, and Inverarity's opinion in the *Encyclopædia of Sport*, uphold the theory of the seizure by the throat from underneath.

I rather think Sanderson's is much the older work. It may have influenced the others. It is to be noted that, according to Lydekker, Sanderson arrived at his conclusion from accounts given by natives. He confesses that he never actually saw a tiger seize its prey. Sanderson was undoubtedly a great sportsman, but is never spoken of as an accurate observer.

Baldwin, Forsyth, Sir Samuel Baker and Moray Brown declare emphatically that a tiger generally seizes the back of the neck. This being my own opinion, I produce some additional evidence to try and prove that the throat theory is untenable, except as a rather unusual occurrence.

At the same time I am quite aware that I may find some sportsmen who entirely disagree. Sir John Hewett tells me that in one of his shoots he had fifty-six "kills," and in every case the marks of the tiger's teeth were in the throat.

Again, one must remember that anyone, who was lucky enough to see a tiger kill its prey, would be in a very excited state. It would be quite within the bounds of possibility to make a mistake regarding what actually did occur. I can recollect, on more than one occasion, after a *melée*, or some very exciting incident, it was most extraordinary

how everyone varied in his, or her, description of the event.

Sir John Campbell, on this killing question, says he has little doubt but that a tiger ordinarily kills with a paw on each shoulder and a bite in the *back of the neck*, thus breaking the spine with the impetus and weight of the body. He brings up another point. Why does a *tigress* nearly always bite off her victim's tail, and throw it away, before she begins to eat? A very curious fact.

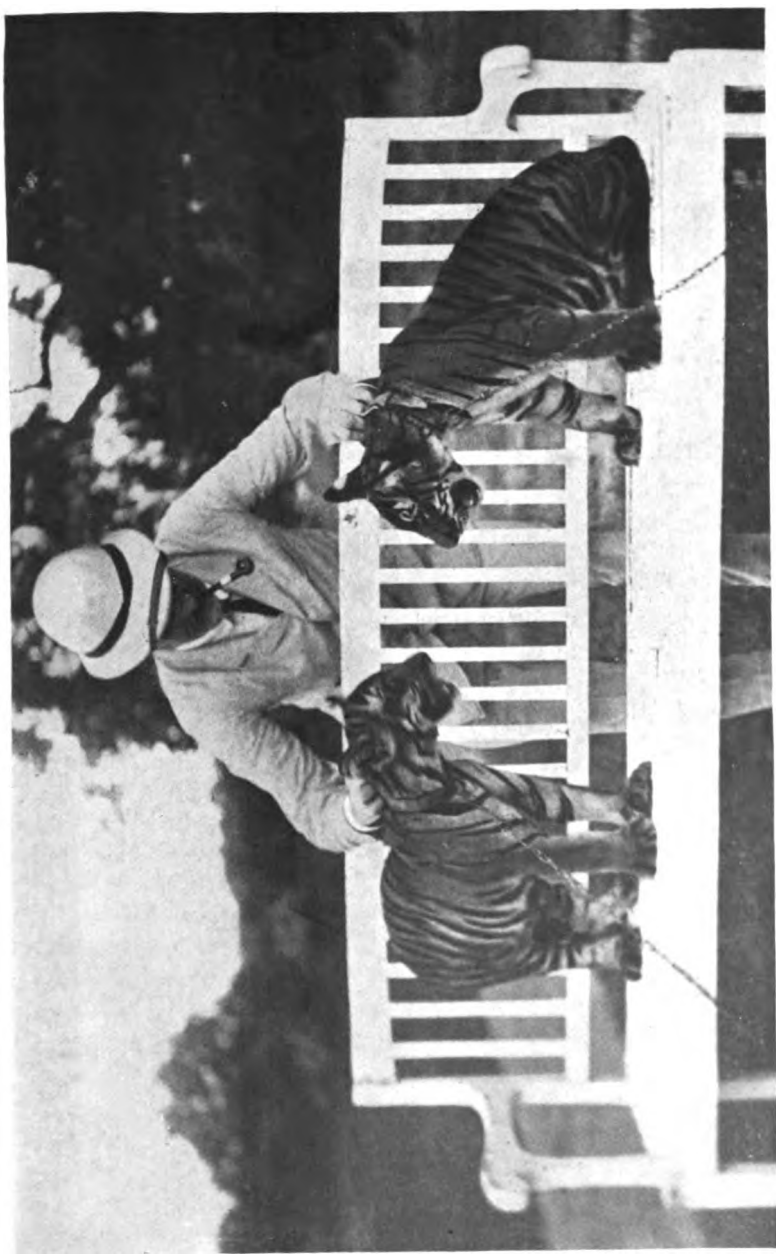
Sir Bindon Blood considers that tiger generally seize their prey by the back of the neck, breaking the neck at once. He adds, however, that he has seen plenty of kills that have been seized by the throat.

Sir John Goodwin, whom I often mention in these pages, writes me :—

“I have carefully examined some forty odd tiger kills, and without exception the teeth-marks showed that the beast had been seized by the *back of the neck*; leopard kills, on the contrary, showed the fang marks in the throat.”

Sir John is not only an admirable shikari, but also a most careful and accurate observer of wild animals and their ways. He is one of that fine class of sportsmen who, like Sir Henry Thornhill, Sir John Hewett, Herky Ross and Jack Lowis, find more delight in living the jungle life and studying nature, than in the mere slaughter of the animal they are after. It is no exaggeration to say that Goodwin has been a student of natural history all his days. On this particular point we are discussing, he also gives me two very valuable contributions from his own personal experience, as follows :—

“When shooting in the Sawaliks in 1898 some natives came into camp to tell me a *tiger* had just killed one of their cattle. They swore it was a *tiger* ‘as big as a buffalo,’ talked of its stripes they had so plainly seen, and of its roar which was so terrifying.



*To face page 45.*

V. JACK LEWIS WITH MOTI AND MINAT, TWO OF THE THREE YOUNG TIGERS AT JUST OVER SIX MONTHS OLD.



"I found that the kill was untouched except for the teeth marks in the throat. As the neck was not dislocated, I concluded the slayer must have been a leopard.

"This was in the middle of the day, say 1 p.m. I got up a tree close by. In about twenty minutes a fine panther walked up to the carcass, and I shot it. A good male, eight feet in length all but an inch, with an old native bullet in its shoulder and an ancient wound in its head."

Then comes an account of a tiger killing its prey, which Sir John was fortunate enough actually to witness. It was a bright moonlight night. He was sitting less than twenty-five feet away from a tethered buffalo, put out as a bait on a broad sandy road. The animal was a good sized *ghara*\*. The quotation is from Sir John's diary written next morning. It was his invariable custom to enter such notes immediately after the occurrence, while they were clear and fresh in his mind. He writes:—

"Presently the buffalo backed on its rope as far as it could, and stood with its tethered foreleg extended, staring intently.

"Then I saw a large tiger, looking enormous in the moonlight, walk straight up to the unfortunate animal within a few feet. For several seconds the two stood facing one another without either of them moving or making the slightest sound. .

"Suddenly the tiger with a growl sprang on top of the buffalo, putting a fore-paw on each shoulder, and seizing the *nape of the neck* in its jaws, at the same time growling and snarling fiercely.

"The *ghara* fell over almost instantly, apparently stone-dead. The tiger continued to snarl and worry the carcass. Subsequent examination showed the neck to be dislocated."

"This was the only occasion," Sir John continues, "on which I saw a tiger actually kill its prey. This

\* Young buffalo about half grown.



occurrence, however, and the very many kills I have examined, confirm me in my belief that Forsyth and Baldwin are correct, in the majority of cases at all events."

Another very keen sportsman with his bump of observation highly developed is Major Charles Steele, of the 13th Hussars, who has shot big game all over the world. As he was for some time a staff officer of mine, I know him well enough to place reliance on his judgment. At my request he gives me his views on the above subject, which I quote in full:—

"*Provided the position is favourable*, I am sure a tiger does not go for the throat. I feel confident it usually springs at the neck, and seizing the crest in its jaws, puts one paw on the withers and the other under the jowl, as it dislocates the neck. As a rule, the impact alone would knock the beast over.

"With certain antlered and horned animals the tiger cannot do this, in which case it may rely on knocking over its prey, and using its teeth in the throat later. I have known a tiger jump on to the quarters of a buffalo, but I fancy this is very unusual."

Unfortunately one cannot accept the statements of natives on this question; seldom even those of reliable shikaris. All are so anxious to please, so keen to say what they imagine the *Sahib* wants. In addition, their mentality is so abnormal, they cannot be relied on to say clearly what they actually did see. Excitement, too, seems to confuse their reasoning to such an extent that every action is distorted, and each point in the narrative a matter of exaggeration.

Sir John Goodwin has given an illustration on this point with reference to his leopard. Hundreds of others occur to me, but a single instance will suffice. It was a Gurkha, too, a race usually much more reliable.

This man had gone on ahead for an afternoon's shikar.

He returned about an hour before I was due to start covered with sweat and greatly excited, to say he had seen a large *tiger* lying on a rock asleep, less than two miles away.

Feeling certain it was not a tiger, I took him to the next room where both a tiger and a leopard skin were on the wall. Pointing to the difference between "spots" and "stripes," I felt sure he would agree it was the former. Not a bit of it. Most obstinately he clung to his statement that it was a *tiger* with many stripes. Had he not my Zeiss glasses, and had he not adjusted them as I had taught him, and made a most thorough inspection? "It was *that*," he said, positively jumping at the tiger-skin in his excitement.

An hour afterwards I had found and shot a *leopard* on the very rock on which he had seen his "tiger"!

I make two exceptions in this matter of natives, one being Samander, the old shikari, and the other my Gurkha orderly, Sarabjit, of the 3rd. The former had shot twelve tiger himself, the latter three—all on foot with an old muzzle loader.

As I have said elsewhere, it is a mistake to imagine that all Gurkhas are *shikaris*. They are all game lovers, but the percentage that has any real knowledge of shikar is very small. When they do possess such experience they are invaluable. Sarabjit was one of these.

Many a talk have I had with Samander and Sarabjit on this vexed question of how a tiger kills its prey. The two were great friends; an unusual case with a Mohammedan and a Hindu, but they were jungle and game devotees to the core, which helped them to soar above such paltry matters as caste and race, when alone in the forest camp.

Neither of them ever wavered in his insistence that the tiger nearly always killed by seizing the nape of the neck, if it could, while the leopard went for the throat of its victim. Both admitted there must be departure

from the rule, and caused by the size and strength of the victim, its position when attacked, if moving or stationary, whether heavily horned or the reverse. Their knowledge and observation of facts impressed me, as did their logic which was invariably sound. My own experiences and study support their views.

To sum up, it seems more than probable that the killing instinct of the tiger induces it to seize the nape of the neck, *as a rule*. Should the animal be small, such as a pig, the tiger may kill it by a blow. A biggish animal, on the move, it possibly attacks by bounding on to it, landing where it can. Fright, impact, and the tiger's weight would usually bring any prey on to its knees, or to the ground, in all cases.

Finally, there is the dislocation of the neck supposition. F. A. Shillingford (one of a family who shot hundreds of tiger), considered the idea of a systematic wrenching of the neck untenable. As will be seen from what I have quoted, he is alone in this view.

I cannot remember ever examining a true tiger kill where the head and neck were not lying in a very unnatural position, with the latter broken. It seems improbable that this was caused by a fall in the struggle ; but rather that the tiger did it methodically, its instinct suggesting this as the surest method of quieting its victim for ever. I do not say it would always be carried out as described by Major Steele. There are other ways, both before and after the animal is downed.

I have threshed out this question at great length entirely owing to my publisher, and I do not believe for a moment he will insert half of what I have quoted ! As a matter of fact, when Herbert Jenkins inspected a sketch by Sir John Goodwin, depicting the tiger bounding on to its victim in the kill he (Goodwin) actually witnessed, my publisher demurred at its reality. He believed from what he had read that the throat was always attacked.

As his only big game hunting has been the pursuit of authors, I am hoping by the above statements to convince him that there are anyhow two sides to the question.

## CHAPTER IV

### HUNTING THE TIGER

**E**XCEPT by a fluke the sportsman is unlikely to put up a tiger unless there has been a "kill."\*

If you are one of a party with elephants you may get a reliable report that one or more tiger have been actually *seen* near a well-known swamp or *rakhh*.† You may have indeed selected this particular locality with that end in view, and you may even get a tiger without a "kill," but there is no great certainty.

One characteristic of tiger in general I should already perhaps have mentioned. There are special places which nearly always "hold" a tiger, and if you kill one another takes his place almost at once. These haunts are well known to shikaris and the local inhabitants.

These special localities possess, of course, the particular qualifications most prized by these animals, such as plenty of game, water, shade, etc. Sometimes they are close to favourite cattle-grazing grounds, or near the tracks taken by herdsmen in their periodical journeys from the hills to the plains, and *vice versa*.

In the great game of tiger hunting flukes are numerous. A friend of mine, hunting deer, came across a tiger asleep

\* There are three kinds of "kill," *e.g.* (a) a natural one, *i.e.*, a village cow, pony, etc.; (b) a "tie up," *i.e.*, a calf buffalo (*ghara*) put out as a bait; (c) a forest kill such as a deer, pig, etc.

† Large area of long grass.

a few paces away, but was so taken aback that before he recovered himself sufficiently to put up his rifle, the beast had disappeared. One tiger crossed a road a few yards in front of a brother officer of mine journeying on a pad elephant to catch a train. He had his rifle across his knees, but as the elephant would not stand still he never got the chance of a shot. A subaltern in the Derbys put up a tiger in a swamp when shooting snipe not far from Bareilly in the United Provinces. He followed it immediately with a few of the boldest of his coolies, and actually killed it.

When you get "khabar"\* of a kill, there are several methods of trying for your tiger. These depend upon ground, supply of elephants, number of "guns," description of jungle, etc. Let me enumerate them one by one.

(a) Beating for tiger with a line of elephants, having some guns in the line and some forward as "stops." This is *the most* satisfactory method of all. Even with experienced mahouts, the line requires a great deal of guidance, and constant supervision, from start to finish, by someone in authority, who should be in the centre. Mahouts are difficult to control, while sometimes they are very inefficient. Young elephants are easily put off by pig, the smell of the tiger, etc. Then they lag behind, or bolt, or swerve to one side, and so leave a gap through which the tiger breaks back. It was a most interesting sight in the Bettiah shoots to see Jack Lewis manœuvre a long line of perhaps sixty elephants through heavy grass, with the animals well closed up, pad touching pad when the tiger was actually located. Beside him always sat Mrs. Lewis, who was almost as good as he was.

This supervision is not half so easy as it may sound. As a matter of fact, it is most difficult, and on its efficient control depends the bagging of your tiger. The whole

\* News brought in by your shikaris or villagers.

time, especially if it is an old hand, this animal is looking out for some mistake, to take immediate advantage of it. It is simply marvellous how quickly a tiger will seize the opportunity of slipping through an accidental gap in the line, when it comes to the point of pushing the beast out into the open.

I can remember a case where gaps were not accidental. A matter of sheer rascality which makes me angry to think about even to this day.

I was shooting in the Doon (United Provinces) with Sutherland in May. We had Samander with us, and got very good news of tiger. Amongst the elephants the one I was riding was 105 years old. I mention this staunch old animal later on, as having been lent me by Vincent Mackinnon.

One stipulation of Mackinnon's was that I should give it twenty pounds of flour a day for *chupatties*, instead of the usual sixteen. This was on account of its great age, and to this, of course, I gladly assented.

The day after we assembled Samander told us the mahouts were sulky, and wanted to speak to Sutherland, who was running the shoot. Their request was that all their elephants also should get twenty pounds a day! As a matter of principle, and mindful of "spoiling the market" for others, Sutherland very rightly refused. There, so we thought, the matter ended.

Next day we got good *khabar* of a kill. With only a few elephants, as we had, it was imperative to put them all in the line to beat. Samander was put into one of our howdahs in the centre to superintend, while Sutherland and I, as "stops," got into convenient trees at the end of the beat.

The piece of jungle we were working was quite small, and the tiger had been cleverly tracked into it by Samander. Nothing came out to us, but when the beat was half way through we heard the elephants trumpeting, and Samander

cursing. The report we got was that the tiger had broken back.

Much the same thing happened a few days afterwards in another beat, when we were three guns, having been joined by a friend of mine, named Collier. That night after dinner Samander came and reported to us he was afraid the mahouts were spoiling our sport on purpose, because of the *chupatti* question.

He explained that he thought it was a put up job, the mahouts arranging it amongst themselves, as follows :—

When the line got close to the tiger two or three elephants would go slow, this forming a block behind the other two portions of the line in echelon, and providing two nice gaps by which the tiger could escape !

We told him he must use his influence with the mahouts (his co-religionists) to stop this rascality at once. We added we were surprised that they had dared to do such a thing with a man of his weight and ascendancy superintending.

Samander smiled at this, and replied that we knew very well how difficult it was for him to do much when it was all a temporary show, and he had no official connection whatever with the mahouts. Moreover, that they were all a scratch lot borrowed from different districts, etc., with no fear of condign punishment from some local authority who had power to punish them.

He added that as he fed with them it would make things very unpleasant if they found out that he had reported the matter at all. His final advice was that we should get some Indian Civil Service officer to join us, as people like Collectors, etc., could always make it hot for any native.

For the next beat, a few days later, we put a very truculent Gurkha N.C.O. I had with me in charge of the line ! The mahouts, after a severe lecture by Sutherland, had been behaving better, but we did not know what



would happen in a beat, when we were absent from the line. The Gurkha's language was appalling, and altogether the experiment was anything but a success !

We only got one tiger the whole shoot, and on that occasion we had joined forces with another party. The line was most efficiently controlled by an officer of the Imperial Forest Department.

This incident shows, not only how difficult it is to control a line of elephants, but also how necessary it is to have with you someone whose word is law to the mahouts, both in the jungle and when they are at home !

(b) Owing to paucity of elephants, or nature of the jungle, it is sometimes necessary to place all the guns as " stops " in trees, and use even the howdah elephants in the line. One gun, however, or someone whose orders are sure to be obeyed, must be with the line, or, as I have just explained, you are not likely to get much result.

(c) In places where elephants cannot be used (precipitous or rocky ground), or where they are not procurable, you may be able to get men-beaters. This is a most exciting form of sport, and especially satisfactory when done from your own camp, where you have learnt all about the ground beforehand, and selected your own tie-up places.

When a bait is killed you have next to think out the direction the tiger is likely to take when driven away from it, decide on the spot for your machan, arrange how the beat should go, fix places for selected men on the flanks as " stops " (to turn the tiger towards the machan by tapping sticks), collect and warn the beaters, etc., etc. In fact, you are matching your wits against those of the tiger, and if successful the satisfaction is immense.

Or, you may have beaters for a natural kill, *khobar* of which has been brought in by local villagers. Here practically the same principles apply, your main thought being where is the tiger likely to make for ? As it may be new country, it is not a bad thing to go first to some

rising ground ; or, if none exists, get into a tree with a local man and find out all about the geography of the place.

(d) Now we come to the case where you cannot get elephants or beaters, yet you want to get a tiger. It may be a matter of a natural kill, or of one of your tied-up buffaloes having been seized. Possibly you are not after tiger at all, but villagers come and tell you of a cow or other animal killed. Then there is great excitement, for your chances are very hopeful if things go well.

The usual plan is to put up a machan in a convenient tree and wait for your quarry to come back to the carcass. Or you may prefer a safe perch behind rocks, or the gnarled trunk of an old tree. Easier to shoot from, but if the tiger does a prowling round before approaching its kill—as is so often its habit—it may spot you or wind you. The slightest movement on your part is also more easily detected.

At times there may be no suitable tree, and you may have to dig a pit. Provided you can site it in such a way that the tiger is most unlikely to approach from that direction, and provided the soil is not too friable and so continually falling in, the pit is the best method of all *for the shot*. You need a little time to dig the hole which, with its surroundings, you must be sure to camouflage most carefully.

If you select a tree you must go well up it to be safe. A tiger can spring twelve feet with ease. Men have been pulled out of trees and killed, or badly mauled. It is not usual for a man to be attacked in a tree, and tigers, because of their great weight, do not climb ; still, with these animals it is the unusual which so often happens.

There is no harm in moving the kill, which should invariably be firmly staked. I have already given an instance of omission to do this, which cost me a tigress. In nine cases out of ten you have to drag the carcass a little on account of the position of your tree or other coign of

vantage, for the kill may be in dead ground and out of sight, or in very deep shade. In the case of a "tie-up" if the rope has not been broken, it may make the animal suspicious if you cut it.

Neither tiger nor leopard is supposed to mind a light near the kill. Herky Ross invariably used a hurricane lantern with a piece of cardboard behind it, so as to light up the kill only. He told me he had shot many tiger this way. Personally, whenever I have used a lantern the animal has not come. You can also purchase an electric lamp to fix to the kill. By this means a strong glare can be switched on to the carcass and its surroundings from your position. This has been successfully used, but I have never tried it.

(e) Then there is sitting up over a live bait in a likely place where are fresh marks of tiger. They have been shot frequently like this, but it is a rather wearisome, disappointing business, and only to be recommended as a last resource.

(f) Tiger have been shot too in the early morning, when going to see if a bait is killed or not. It is quite a good plan, but extreme caution is required, and one needs to be very sure of oneself, and one's rifle. Even with every care, and a real good shikari, fatal accidents may happen, one of which I shall describe later on.

(g) Lastly, there is stalking a tiger. This is the most exciting of all methods, but little good unless it is very hot weather, with but few pools of water, all of which are known. If you get a kill from a bait tied up some little way from a pool, and go to the water with the utmost caution in the early afternoon, when the sun has had time really to bake the earth, you ought to get a shot. Tiger cannot keep away from water when it is very hot, and you may find one actually in it, probably taking advantage of any existing shade.

I have already said that in this great game of tiger

hunting there are many flukes. There are also many very remarkable occurrences. The irreverent jester might call some of them "sporting lies," but my stories are all quite true. I generally give the names of the principal actors, and when I do not, it is because I have forgotten them. You cannot remember everybody when you are recounting the experiences of forty years.

Here is a story where I have forgotten the names. I was acquainted with a man of means who was awfully keen on getting a tiger. He did not care a jot for the sport, but he wanted a *skin* before going home! So keen was he that he was quite prepared to rough it, and undergo what he considered great discomfort and intolerable heat.

A friend of mine was persuaded to take him out, the tiger-seeker paying all expenses. With much difficulty they collected some elephants, and with still greater difficulty they obtained a fortnight's shooting permit for Nepal.

The *bandobast* was not good, and the shikari they got hold of was a rotter. Now and then they had a kill, but nothing ever came of it. If it was a beat, the tiger slipped through the line; if one of them sat up, then the tiger never appeared.

After a fortnight they were pretty well fed up, and only one day more remained. Going to look at his "bait" in the early morning, the shikari found a *dead* tiger near a stream. The tiger had killed a porcupine. On eating it a quill had got into its throat, and eventually choked it. The tiger had not been dead long and, though greatly emaciated, the skin was in good order. So the man of means got his trophy after all.

Dopping-Hepenstal, of my regiment, was staying once on duty with the Resident in Nepal. A "T. G."\* (I think a celebrated manufacturer, afterwards raised to

\* Travelling Gent, *i.e.*, globe trotter.

the peerage), having got an introduction, was asked to stay and shoot.

"Dopper" was included amongst the guns, and was extremely pleased, as he had never shot a tiger. They had several unsuccessful beats, and then a tiger breaking near Dopper, he killed it with one shot.

The Resident seemed very pleased, and helped the slayer to measure the beast. A little later, the "T. G.," who had been a distant "stop," turned up. As his elephant halted, preparatory to kneeling down, the Resident called out :

"Well done, Mr. P., best congratulations."

I know Dopper. His face must have been a study.

Another brother officer called Edwardes (nickname Murphy), had an odd experience when shooting in the Kumaon Tarai. He was out on a pad elephant, not very far from his camp, with his orderly seated behind him. Happening to turn round once in the jungle, he saw that a tiger was actually following them.

Why the tiger was doing this he could never make out. Even if the animal had mistaken the pad for a young wild one, I have never heard of tiger eating elephant. Anyhow, Murphy was very pleased, and taking a shot wounded the tiger badly, but it got away. There was a good blood trail which was followed for a long distance, until it came to an end at a deep masonry irrigation canal. Casting every side from this point without any result, Murphy had to give it up, and went home in great disgust. When he arrived at the little forest bungalow where he was living, he received the soothing news that his tiger was already in camp!

What had happened was this. The tiger, on arriving at the canal, had either bent down to get a drink, or had attempted to cross. Whichever it did was too much for it in its wounded state, and it fell into the water, which apparently finished it off.

The irrigation canal ran past the bungalow, and right through its camping ground. Two of Murphy's Gurkhas were fishing from a culvert which bridged the forest track at the camp. To their surprise they suddenly saw a dead tiger floating down towards them.

Although this was not an everyday occurrence, they jumped to the conclusion that the animal must have been shot by the *Sahib*, and had either fallen into the canal, or had been floated down by Murphy to save loading. Being wise little men they stopped the body, called to their pals, and fished it out.

Murphy always had great luck. He once drew the third horse in the Calcutta Derby Sweep.

No description of how tiger are hunted would be complete without a brief reference to "ringing" a tiger. This method is employed in the big Nepal shoots, though not likely to be met with elsewhere. In the first place there are few jungles (where hunting tiger is feasible) with such a mass of dense undergrowth as in the Nepalese Tarai. To say nothing of huge patches of *narkat* which is dreadful stuff to get through. I reproduce a picture of elephants in this gargantuan weed during the King's shoot in the year 1911.

Beating up to "stops," as done in the grass *rakhs* and more open forests of the United Provinces, is slow work, and very often useless in Nepal because, even if you are pretty certain where the tiger is lying up, the animal has a dozen lines of retreat, all perhaps equally good. In fact it is difficult to choose a spot where a gun is likely to get a shot.

In the second place the "ringing" method requires a very large number of elephants, and these are seldom obtainable except in Nepal. A big piece of *narkat* may necessitate the use of nearly a hundred. Then in a large shoot there will be a *khabar* of tiger in areas widely separated. As I have mentioned elsewhere over five hundred elephants

were collected for the Prince of Wales' shoot in Nepal (December, 1921). These animals were probably divided up into four or five *phants*, each batch being kept together in a different locality, so as to be handy wherever required.

"Ringing" is resorted to also in ordinary jungle, and in other places than Nepal, when a large number of elephants is forthcoming, and many tiger are afoot, or it is important for a certain personage to get the first shot. For instance, the late Sir Henry Ramsay told me that in the year 1875 he purposely "ringed" tiger for the late King Edward's shoots. I have told the story elsewhere in this volume of the unfortunate *contretemps* over the first shot!

The method of "ringing" is usually carried out somewhat as follows:—

The whereabouts of the tiger or tigers having been located, the head *shikari* leads the elephants towards the particular spot. When fairly near the game he directs the first elephant to move half right and the second one half left, and so on alternately; the guns, in their howdahs, being dispersed amongst the elephants. The two lines, as directed, meet eventually with the tiger, or tigers, within the circle, and the elephants all facing inwards.

The strange thing is that this manœuvre, although accompanied by a good deal of noise when breaking through heavy jungle and crashing down trees and branches, seldom disturbs a tiger seriously. This is to be accounted for, partly by the fact that a tiger does not want to move a bit after a good meal, and secondly, because the noisy movement of wild elephants in the forest is frequently taking place.

When the circle is formed, an inspection is made by the head *shikari* on a speedy young elephant, and it is wonderful the pace he goes round. Gaps are put right and the "ring" probably drawn much closer. All this time the



*To face page 46.*

*Photo, Herzog and Higgins, Mhow, C.I.*

**KING GEORGE IN HIS HOWDAH EMERGING FROM HEAVY "NARKAT" IN NEPAL.**





elephants are trampling down the undergrowth and pushing over young trees, so that a sort of clearing is made, enabling the guns to see a tiger when it breaks. Even now it is quite possible that the animal has not yet moved. Some shikaris then draw the "ring" very close, others leave quite a large central patch with a diameter of a hundred yards or more so as to avoid the risk of an elephant being shot instead of a tiger!

We have now got to the stage where there are one or more tiger in a piece of heavy jungle surrounded by elephants, and still no sign from the tiger. Something has to be done. A couple of tuskers are sent in to topple a tree on to him, or one of the tusker's mahouts may see a tiger and manage to shift it by a good shot with a beer bottle, or a lump of wood!

Out comes the beast with a roar, charges the ring and gets shot. I reproduce a picture of two tiger charging in similar circumstances.

This is one of the exceptions to the rule that an unwounded tiger does not charge. Here the poor devil is at bay. Moreover it has probably been cognisant for some time of most unusual happenings, and has been nursing its wrath. A whack in the back from a well-aimed log, or a dig in the ribs from a falling branch just makes the animal "see red," and out it comes.

It is a strange fact that, unwounded, it seldom goes for the intruding elephant, but charges straight for the ring. It is easy to understand that it has not much of a chance. A very smart tiger will sometimes escape by going for a "nervy" elephant which breaks away. This is called "breaking the ring."

Even then the tiger's death is only postponed for a short period. That is to say the animal is re-ringed. You may wonder how this is possible in such dense and impenetrable jungle affording refuge on all sides. Well, it does not always come off, but the Nepalese shikaris are such wizards

in discerning the probable patch to which the tiger has gone, that more often than not the animal is located all right.

I must not omit to mention another method of tiger hunting, common in Manchuria. One summer in Darjeeling an Englishman in the Chinese Government service showed me a beautiful tiger-skin, he had bagged in Manchuria, and electrified me by his account of the hunt.

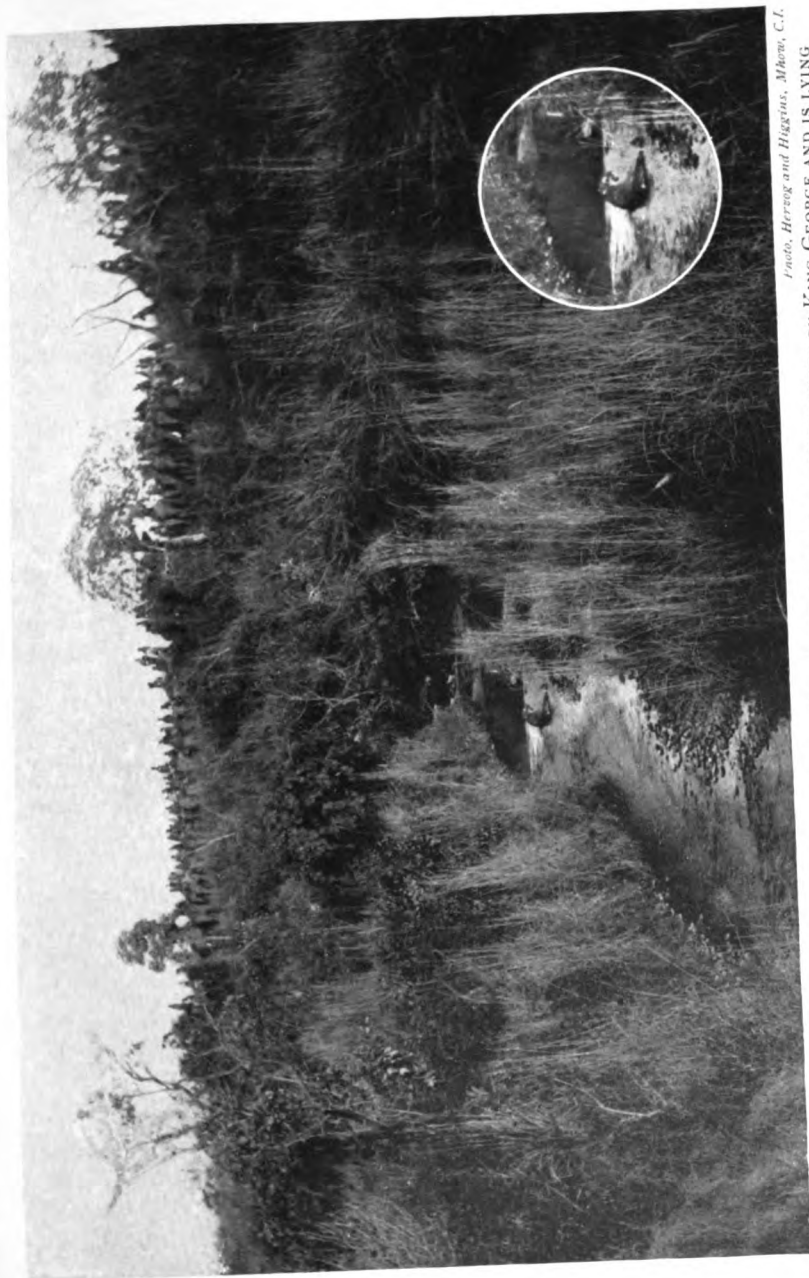
He was taken by his shikari to a rocky hill-side honey-combed with caves, where he wounded a big tiger, which disappeared into a large cavern. This was the sportsman's first venture after Chinese tiger, and he told me he never felt in such a funk in his life as he did when the Chinaman calmly told him he was going to get torches so that they could follow up the beast in the cave!

During the interval that occurred my friend thought of every conceivable excuse he could make to get out of the adventure. No suggestion that he could honourably accept came to mind, so he had to steel himself to pretend he was as brave a man as the quite intrepid shikari.

Taking off his boots and most of his clothes the sportsman entered the cave with his guide. At first it was quite light, and they could walk almost upright. On the ground was a thick blood trail, and away in the distance they could hear the tiger coughing.

Soon they had to get on to their hands and knees, and it became so dark that the Chinaman lighted a torch. This was attached to a long pole, and pushed forward in front of the Englishman by the shikari behind. The former told me the smoke was most pungent and almost obscured his vision. He added that it was only by the exercise of all his will-power that he could prevent himself literally shaking with funk. He confessed he would have given anything to retire.

Nearer and nearer they crawled towards the tiger, and louder and louder grew the coughing, but there was nothing to be seen. At last the sportsman spotted two glaring



To face page 58

THE ELEPHANT RING CLOSER IN (see *Frontispiece*). THE TIGER HAS BEEN BADLY WOUNDED BY KING GEORGE AND IS LYING ROARING IN THE SAME STREAM. OBSERVE THE CLOSE RING OF ELEPHANTS AGAINST THE SKY-LINE.

*Indo, Herreg and Higgins, Mhow, C.I.*



eyes about twenty feet away. He fired between them. There was a rush, out went the torch, and the Englishman sank on to the ground utterly exhausted.

When he came to, he found the cave well lighted up, and a grinning Chinaman reclining on the head of a dead tiger! My friend told me this was the usual method of hunting the tiger in Manchuria, only that, as a rule, you crawled into a cave to get your first shot by the light of a torch. Apparently the tiger was tracked into the cave by shikaris. This sportsman added—and it seemed to me in quite good faith—that although the method required a great deal of nerve, it was not really half so dangerous as it appeared. Cavern-bred tiger, he said, seldom charged, even when wounded or brought to bay.

He seemed to imply that the lighted torch in a dark cave cowed them. I do not know about the danger, but I *do* know that the recital of this incident left me with a strong feeling that Manchurian tiger hunting must be about the most nerve-racking and risky game imaginable !

## CHAPTER V

### SOME TIGER STORIES

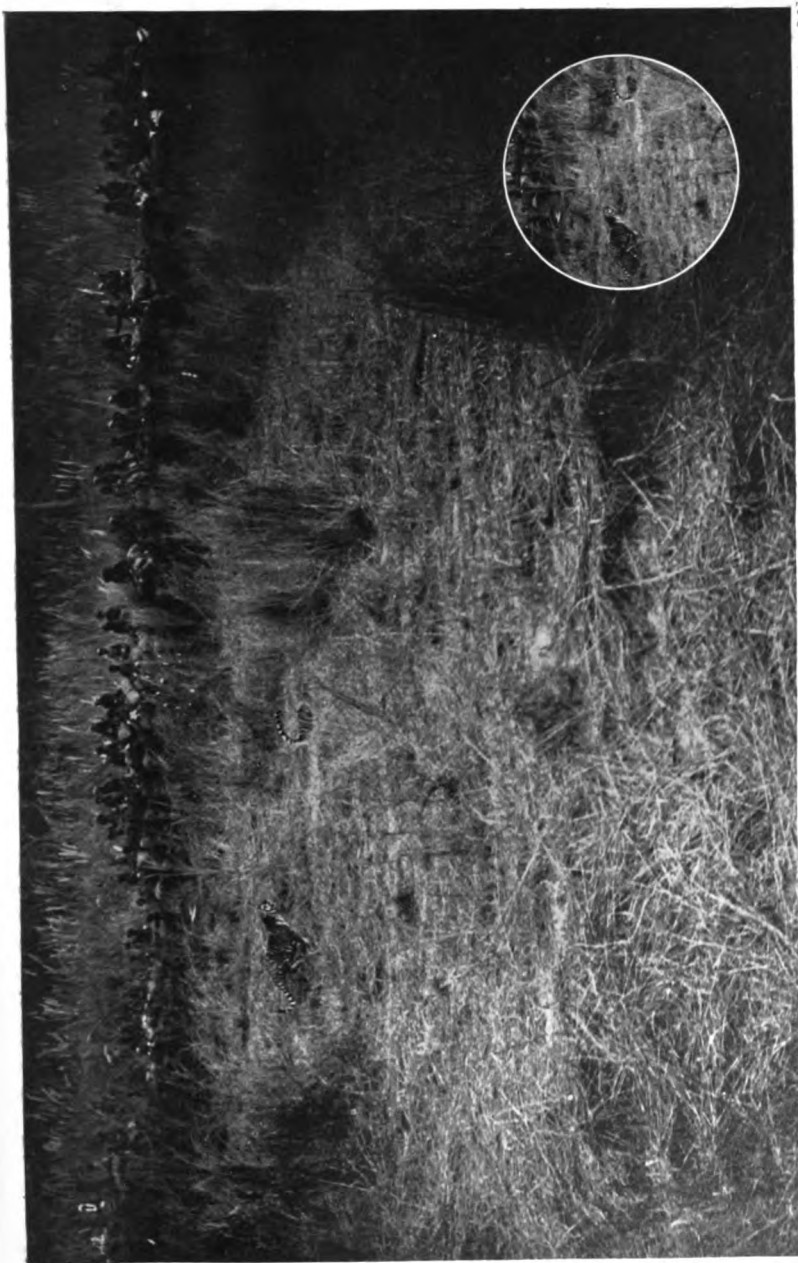
I HAVE mentioned various methods of hunting the tiger, and labelled them (a) to (g). Let me take these methods in turn with accounts of incidents connected with each one.

The first tiger I ever saw was when shooting with Herky Ross off elephants in the Kumaon Tarai. We were coming through some partially burnt grass in the evening on the way home, and shooting *parah*.\* I had only a kind of *chuprassie*† in the howdah behind me. Suddenly something huge bolted from a corner of the unburnt strip we were beating, and galloped across a burnt patch. As the animal was quite black (the effect of moving through the grass that had been fired) I was much confused as to its identity.

A few minutes later we came across a dead cow. Examination by experts proved it to be a fresh tiger kill, but it was too late to beat any more. Next morning we got information that a tigress had been seen moving into an adjacent swamp. Herky said he knew the place well, and it was full of *phassand* (bog). We worked it somehow with any amount of fireworks thrown into the boggy places. These went off with a tremendous explosion,

\* Hog deer.

† Office attendant and messenger.



*Photo, Herzog and Higgins, Mhow, C.I.*

TWO TIGERS CHARGING A "RING" OF ELEPHANTS.

*To face page 60.*





but there was no tigress, so we went away to the long grass in the vicinity of the kill.

I went as a "stop" to the end of the beat, and Herky brought up the line. When it was quite close to me I saw he had his rifle at the "present." Then the tigress walked quietly out between us. He fired at a distance of about twenty yards and *missing* (Herky Ross to *miss* was something almost unknown) she went off with a huge bound. Not knowing much about the etiquette of this sort of shooting, I had not fired when the tigress was first visible, and going at a walk, because I felt it was my host's shot, as he was actually at the aim. I know better now, and was pretty sick about it afterwards.

*Moral.* Invariably take the first chance of a shot at a tiger in all circumstances when shooting off elephants if the animal is within a decent range. Long shots at tiger are, I am sure, a mistake. I carry this too far at times, for I missed a good chance once at a fine tiger walking slowly away at a distance of about eighty yards. It did not matter, as we put it up again and my friend Edward Coffin killed it with a very fine shot.

Of all the splendid shoots with our Bettiah hosts one stands out as the most exciting. It was on an island in the river Gandak, which rises in Nepal. The long grass we were beating was shaped like a horse-shoe, about two miles long with a broad forest drive cut across the top dividing the beat in two. The line started at one end, while I was the centre of three "stops" moved forward to take post, in our howdahs, on the forest road.

As the beat approached within two hundred yards, we saw much movement in the grass in front of us, and my wife behind whispered "Tiger!" I answered, "No, pig," thinking by the many movements it must be a "sunder." Just then I saw something big stop in a slight opening of the heavy grass, but it was too dark within to make it out. I put up my rifle, however, a double-

barrelled .303, and then not wishing to fire at a boar, took it down again. As I did so, there was a rush and a roar, and out charged a tigress across the drive, and straight for our elephant. As she was about half way across I fired, and saw the bullet hit the ground on the other side of her.

The shot turned her, but at the same time our elephant whipped round and bolted. I had just time to see the tigress take cover in some thorn bushes on the left of where we had been standing, when all my attention had to be concentrated to hanging on with both hands to the rails of the howdah to prevent being shaken out! Luckily the mahout was able to keep our elephant away from the tree jungle, and after going a quarter mile he stopped the beast by dint of pushing the point of his *\*ankus* right into the *\*"raw,"* and twisting it round.

My wife, the most tender-hearted of women, always strongly objected to this "raw," and had frequently remonstrated with the mahout for touching it when the elephant was refractory. On this occasion so wild was her excitement, I actually heard her urging him to go deeper! In camp afterwards, so great was her contrition, she wasted half a pot of cold cream in the wound!

On getting back to my place Jack Lowis called out to know what had happened, and when I said I had missed a tigress, told me to leave her alone, and close in with the other two "stops." He added he would then bring round the flank elephants to form a "ring," as there were three or more tiger in the grass in front of him. As we moved forward out came the tigress from behind the third "stop" on my left. Failing to charge home, No. 3 "stop" swung round, and got a shot at her as she was again entering cover. It was the case of the "lethal" bullet out of a 12-bore which I mention later on.

As the "ring" was nearing completion I heard "bang" and a roar from near Lowis. Then a most awful row

\*See page 250.

commenced. Regularly frightened by the tusker the night before (as I have described elsewhere, when talking about elephants communicating news to one another) the whole of the sixty elephants began trumpeting, roaring, emitting rumbling growls and beating their trunks on the ground, while the young ones did nothing but squeak. This commotion, with the shouts and curses of the mahouts, and the roar of a dying tiger made an indescribable clamour. In the middle of it I spotted another tiger sneaking along the ground beside my elephant, who was stamping the grass, and generally most unsteady. Leaning right over the howdah I shot it through the back, and it fell on its side without a sound.

Then "bang" to a flank, another roar, and after it a low continuous squeak with the vista of a young elephant bolting off. Through the breach one tiger was seen by a mahout to slip away, and there may have been others.

When order was somewhat restored Lowis decided to beat up the other side of the horse-shoe for the tigress, but she was not there. We then moved to a further possible place, but had only gone a hundred yards when she was found lying dead in the open. I had shot her through the lungs, and the small bore bullet, penetrating her body, had kicked up the dust on the road that I had seen and taken to denote a miss.

There was one peculiarity about the Bettiah shoots worth mentioning. Accompanying the elephants to the site of each beat was a crowd of two or three hundred men carrying lengths of netting about four feet high with a six inch mesh. These men were called "Taroos," and were the offspring of Gurkhas from the uplands and women of the plains. Very nice cheery people who lived on little homesteads kept scrupulously clean and neat.

The nets were set up with bamboo sticks round the far edge of the jungle to be beaten, and just in front of

the "stops." After erection the men climbed trees in the vicinity, and usually kept very quiet.

At times these Tarooos were very foolhardy. When I shot that tigress (which I thought I had missed) charging across the forest drive, a Taroo in a tree close by got down to fetch his stick, which he had left on the track. We were just getting the bolting elephant back to its place. Catching sight of the man, I shouted to him to stop. At that instant the tigress charged out with a roar, and only missed him by inches. After that he did not bother much more about the stick, but made for his tree at best pace!

You would not think a four feet high net much of an obstacle to a tiger. It is not, though one was never known to jump it. The object of the netting was to make the tiger halt before bolting, and give a shot to one of the "stops." It served its purpose admirably many a time, and only once did I know a tiger get entangled in its meshes. It was a tigress, and she made the most awful noise roaring and rolling until she broke loose. Unfortunately the "stop" who should have been there was delayed *en route* owing to heavy thorn jungle, and the tigress got clean away.

Before bolting, a tiger nearly always has a good look round. In this case netting worried it horribly, and sometimes it would not face it at all, but charged back at the line. If not killed, owing to the difficulty of seeing it in long grass, the tiger would then have probably another look at the nets, and make for an opening where one length overlapped another. Sometimes it gave a shot while on the prowl for this opening. Occasionally pig darted into the net and got entangled, when there was the devil of a squealing!

Elsewhere I have made mention of the ineffectiveness of small bore rifles for hunting dangerous game, especially on foot. I will give a typical instance when, if I had

been on foot instead of in a howdah, a tiger would certainly have killed me.

The incident occurred in one of the Bettiah shoots in the hot weather. We were a party of nine men including Jack Lewis, my son Nigel, and Colonel D., the C.O. of the British infantry battalion at Cawnpore. *Khabar* of a kill came about 8 a.m. of an intensely hot day, and we left camp some three hours later.

The bait had been killed in the dry bed of a river which encircled a belt of tall grass on a good deal higher level than the river bed itself. The belt extended for a mile or so with a varying breadth of two or three hundred yards, narrowing at each end. The tiger had dragged the kill inside the belt of grass, and was evidently lying up under a few scattered *neem* trees situated about two hundred yards from the northern edge, which was the one we approached.

Jack Lewis posted four of us in the river bed, to remain there, in our howdahs, as "stops." He took Nigel and the other three guns, with the line of sixty elephants, to the southern side of the belt, whence they were to beat in a close line up the grass through the *neem* trees and right on to us "stops," who were waiting in the broiling sun at the northern edge.

I was No. 2 "stop," with the colonel on my left as No. 3; Nos. 1 and 4 extended the flanks, and the whole of us entirely covered the northern bend of the belt. We were placed about twenty paces from the high grass, and fifty to a hundred paces apart. The colonel was meant to bag the tiger. Opposite him was a small animal track leading through the grass to some water in the *neem* tree patch. Behind this "stop," and across the river, was a bit of thick jungle. I thought to myself, "What a 'sitter' you have got!"

His post, however, did not please the colonel. After a few minutes he moved forward, and topping the rise

placed himself *on* the little track inside the high grass. Rather foolish I thought, as it might alarm the tiger, also visibility would be difficult ; but it was no affair of mine.

Half an hour's wait, and we heard the mahouts shouting to their elephants, and Jack's voice controlling the line. Shortly afterwards I noticed the colonel's elephant, usually most steady, fidgetting a good deal. This I felt sure meant the tiger was on the move.

A few minutes later an enormous tiger's head suddenly appeared \* at the edge of the grass exactly opposite to me. About the same time the line reached the *neem* trees. My double-barrelled .303 was extremely handy, and I put it up at once, but the movement was sufficient to cause the head to be withdrawn inside the grass like a flash.

The colonel's elephant had now started making half circles, while the line had passed the *neem* trees. The tiger had probably taken a peep at the other "stops" too, and did not relish the idea of leaving covert.

The line being now at the narrow end of the belt, the outside elephant on each flank (both trusted females) was on the very edge of the grass. Jack Lewis could be seen in the centre giving directions. He had all his elephants beautifully under control, pad touching pad.

So tightly were they jammed together, that occasionally a youngster would be almost squeezed out, and we heard the squeal as, under the persuasion of its mahout's *ankus*, it was pushed up again into its place.

Then the tiger charged towards the right of the line with deep-throated roars, then the centre, then the left. It was marvellous the pace it went through that heavy grass.

Bang ! Bang ! from several rifles in the line, but the

\* I reproduce a picture depicting a very similar incident, except that my tiger did not expose himself quite so clearly.





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tiger never exposed itself, and no one saw anything more than movement in the grass. It is a fact, that I cannot call to mind any instance of a tiger, or leopard, being hit by a shot made at moving grass, but you must fire, or the animal may break through.

There was much squealing and trumpeting, and the delightful metallic sound of trunks thumped on the ground, but there was no break. Defeated in its attempt to find a way of escape through the line, the tiger made no sign for a minute or so. I, of course, was leaning over the front of my howdah at the "ready," with every nerve at the highest tension, and streaming with sweat.

Movement to my left front, and out of the grass lolloped, at a distance of about thirty paces, the biggest tiger I had ever seen. So big, indeed, that for a flash a feeling came over me, as I have said elsewhere, that it was a case of two tiger in prolongation.

There was no time to lose, for not only in a few strides would it be hidden in some short grass in the river bed, but I was naturally anxious to bag it myself. At the moment the only other gun that could see it was No. 1 "stop" on my right, and he could not fire for fear of hitting me or my elephant. The rise, up to the belt of high grass, defiladed the tiger from the line, until such time as it neared the short grass it was making for.

As it turned out I made rather too much allowance for pace, and I was a bit too far in front, the bullet hitting it ~~in~~ its left shoulder instead of behind it. The tiger did not "speak" to the shot, but stumbling badly turned towards me.

On seeing this I gave it the second barrel at which it seemed to flinch ever so little, but there was no striking lurch forward, nor did it utter a sound.

Immediately I fired the second shot the tiger turned again in its original direction, and was almost at once visible to the colonel, and to the line. A salvo of shots was

■ ■

the result. It sounded just like "rapid" fire. As this ceased, the tiger disappeared out of sight in the river grass.

The line was with us in a minute, and I joined it alongside my son. He told me he had put in two shots, one in the moving grass when the tiger charged, and another in the river bed. The latter he thought was a hit.

We then followed into the short grass, and I walked my elephant along the exact line the tiger had taken, but up to the grass could see no blood trail at all. A few yards inside I saw a lot, and almost at the same time spotted the tiger. It was lying dead on its right side, and the strange thing was that when we got down from our elephants and looked at it, we could none of us see any wound at all!

I felt horribly chagrined, for I had certainly fired at its left side, which was the one exposed to us. Then there was that bad stumble or lurch after my first shot. Bending down, I examined its left shoulder, and in the middle of it found a neat little puncture. Such a tiny hole, just like one made in a leather strap by a very small punch.

We then turned the beast over, and found a large exit hole under its right elbow. Its head was examined next, and another puncture, similar to the first, was visible in its neck, low down behind the ears.

But what about the bullets from the line? Going carefully over its back and rump, we could find nothing. Then someone lifted up its tail, and in a cluster within an inch or two of its *anus* were four bullet wounds.

The tiger was then promptly claimed by one of the guns in the line. Whether as a result of a shot at the moving grass, or when, was not quite clear. Jack Lewis, turning to No. 1 "stop," asked him what he had seen. This old sportsman (Gordon-Canning, commonly called "Dot") said at once that the first and second shots fired

were mine, and he had seen the tiger fall over at the first one. In this he was not quite correct. He mistook the lurch for a fall.

Meanwhile the claimant from the line was explaining how his shot was the first hit, and how it had penetrated the body, and come out at the elbow. Jack pointed out my little punctures, and said I was the only one shooting with a .303, which was undoubtedly the bullet that had made those tiny holes.

The morning's strain was beginning to tell, enhanced by the great heat, and suspense regarding the award. Lewis, calling aside No. 4 "stop" and one gun from the line, walked off into the blue, while Gordon-Canning and the others went through the preparations for measurement.

I felt I could not stick it any longer. The tiger looked enormous, and much bigger than any I had ever seen. It appeared as if the trophy must be mine, but still the question was not settled. Jack Lewis was most careful always to sift the matter thoroughly. Pulling out my pipe, I walked away into the river bed, and sat in some shade near the belt of grass.

A quarter of an hour afterwards on my return Lewis met me. He took off his hat, made a little bow, put out his hand and said :

"Congratulations, ten feet two inches."

As I explained, I did not see the tiger measured, but I was told it was done between pegs. Anyhow, it was a whopper, and my delight at getting it was very great.

I began this long yarn to prove the ineffectual stopping power of the .303. Let us follow the course of my two bullets. The first one hit the animal *in* the left shoulder, went through its body, and came out below its off elbow. The tiger simply gave a lurch, and turned in the direction of the firer.

The second entered behind the ears, and went through

its neck and near shoulder. We found it, a good deal expanded, just inside the inner skin, and about three inches from the entry hole of the first shot. It was so close to the surface that when the outer skin was removed I scratched it out with a bit of stick.

Yet two such awful wounds with a .303 bullet had no immediate effect. Indeed, after the second, as I have described, the tiger turned in its original direction, and apparently unwounded, got to covert.

On the whole, though, except for dangerous game, I was quite satisfied with this little weapon. Regarding the particular occasion just narrated I had got a new bullet (Velox), which I rather think accounted for this poor result. As I felt, however, that it was not good enough to continue with this rifle (because at any time I might be on foot) I sent it home to be sold, and ordered a modern nitro rifle, .400—.450, in its place.

It was rather sickening to find the .303, though beautifully finished, only realised three pounds. I would have got it out again and tried various bullets, but was unable to do so as the import of the .303 into India (as well as the .450 bore) is prohibited.

This regulation was framed because our troops (or armed police) are equipped with either the .303 Lee-Enfield, or .450 Martini-Henry. It is not advisable, therefore, to allow the import of arms of the same bore as those for which millions of cartridges are stored.

Talking of this little hammerless double-barrelled .303 reminds me to sound a note of warning about the care one should take of one's rifles in India. Indeed, it is recommended to send weapons to the makers to be overhauled periodically, certainly every two or three years. One very fine shot I knew, who did much tiger shooting on foot, sent his rifle to Rigby every year.

When I went to my first Bettiah shoot I was raising a new Gurkha battalion, and had not pulled a trigger



A MAGNIFICENT BETTIAH TIGER.

*To face page 26.*



for more than a year. The .303 I bought, just about that time, from a friend who had not used it for some considerable time. I tried half a dozen shots before purchase, and was quite satisfied.

The day after we got into camp near Bettiah for this shoot, *khabar* came in of a tigress with two cubs. Off we went, and found she had been marked down in a small patch of grass. I was put with L. at the end of the grass, while Jack Lowis beat, with his line of elephants, towards us.

When the line got near the end of the patch out walked the tigress very slowly, making for the further side of L. I drew a beautiful bead, long before his elephant masked my shot and had a *misfire*. I was so astounded that instead of pulling the other trigger at once, I pointed the muzzle upwards.

What caused me to do this was that a year or two before I had a misfire in a single barrel, but a second or so afterwards the charge exploded. This old incident must have flashed through my brain, and it was a case of "safety first."

I recovered pretty quickly to note that all I could see then of the tigress was her feet below the belly of L.'s elephant. She was putting one pad down after the other quite slowly.

I wondered why on earth L. did not fire, for she was within ten paces of him. Then I saw that his elephant was unsteady. Evidently he could not get a bead that satisfied him.

Just as the tigress' head was visible to me past his elephant, L. fired and missed her clean. She gave a great bound forward, and at once was out of sight. I fired my left barrel as she disappeared, but did no good. We never saw her again.

On examining my rifle later I found the right striker was defective. My young orderly had probably been



playing with it. Anyhow, it lost me a nice tigress.

The moral is quite plain. Test your rifle very carefully before a tiger shoot, and do not be satisfied with anything but a periodical overhaul.

Sir Bindon Blood was one of the very few men I knew who seemed to prefer riding a male elephant (tusker or *makna*) to a female. He thought they were stauncher. They served him often in good stead. When out with three other guns once, the party had three wounded tiger down in long grass. Not one of the elephants of his three friends would face the grass. Sir Bindon on his *makna* (tuskless male) went in, and killed all three tiger without getting his elephant scratched.

The "nearest thing" Sir Bindon ever saw out tiger shooting, was in the Goona jungles in Central India, where you beat undulating stony ground (interspersed with good big trees) by means of men. A large number of the beaters are often sowars (Indian cavalry soldiers) of the Central India Horse. They beat splendidly, and it is excellent training for them.

For this particular beat, Sir Bindon was a stop on a big boulder, and the next stop on the right was a young subaltern, in a tree. The lad was out for his first shoot. A tigress passed the boy, who fired two shots, making her "speak" loudly. This youngster had been told by Sir Bindon that on no account must he move from his tree, if either of them wounded a tiger, until Sir Bindon came to him.

As he knew boys, Sir Bindon got off his boulder at once when he heard the growl. Of course he found the subaltern on the ground, flushed with excitement, and actually about to enter some thick stuff after a blood trail! For this he got beans, and then he was asked if he had re-loaded his rifle? No! He had quite forgotten to do so! He was sent back to his tree with a flea in his ear.

It turned out that the tigress was lying about thirty yards away. As Sir Bindon says, there is not the slightest doubt but that his young friend would have walked straight on to her with an empty rifle. That is the way fellows get killed out tiger shooting.

The other stops and a lot of sowars of the C.I.H. were collected, and a close line formed for the purpose of walking up the tigress. Preceded by careful stone throwing, an advance was made. When five yards short of her, up jumped the tigress sideways on, as she was lying. Everyone fired. The tigress disappeared and rolled down a deep slope. At the bottom of this they found her dead, but with only *one bullet* in her, besides the first wound.

One year in Alwar Sir Bindon killed a tiger. A tigress in the same beat, having been missed, got into a cave. His Afghan orderly (Havildar Abdulla Khan of the Sappers and Miners, whom Sir Bindon had known from a child, and thought the world of) spotted the tigress' eyes in the cave. Dismounting from his elephant, Sir Bindon found he could see the eyes too, at a distance of about fifteen yards.

An obstacle of branches was formed in front of the cave, and so arranged that a shot could be taken between the beast's eyes. The two friends of Sir Bindon ranged up on their elephants, one on each side of him, while Abdulla Khan stood close by carrying the second rifle.

Just as Sir Bindon was kneeling down for the shot, he saw ten Gujar shikaris, lent him by the Maharajah, standing behind. He ordered them into trees, but to his astonishment they respectfully declined to go!

"No!" they said. "We shall see this business through. Our faces would be blackened for life if we did otherwise."

They were armed with hog spears, and knelt down beside Sir Bindon, with the butts firmly planted in the ground, and spear ends towards the foe.

Sir Bindon fired with his 12-bore rifle, carrying six drams of powder and a spherical bullet. To his surprise

out rushed the tigress, but put off by the hanging smoke of this monster charge, she turned sharp off to the right, and got out of sight in some long grass. The Gujars never flinched. Each of the other two guns fired, but missed.

Sir Bindon mounted his elephant and killed the tigress in the long grass. She must have just moved her head as he fired into the cave, for the bullet had gone through her jaws, below the eyes, from right to left.

## CHAPTER VI

### BEATING FOR TIGER WITH ELEPHANTS

**B**EATING for tiger with elephants, and when shooting from a howdah, you must take your chance of the elephant being unsteady at the shot. When standing as a "stop" it is wonderful how motionless a good elephant can be, provided it has a good mahout. When Herky Ross missed that sitting shot, which I described in the last chapter, he put it down to his elephant moving.

I have told the tale of L. and the tigress. He had his rifle at the "present" for an interminable time. I am not sure his elephant was so very unsteady. If it was, the slow, measured tread of the tigress in the open may have disconcerted it.

Then there was the case of the colonel, on the day I shot my 10 foot 2 inch tiger. This was not a case of being unsteady at the shot, but of an elephant being generally unsteady while on "stop." Lowis was not in the habit of giving his guests unreliable elephants. I knew this particular one quite well, for I had often ridden it.

Elephants are very peculiar animals. It almost appears as if, on the above occasion, the beast knew it had been posted in the river-bed, and resented any change. It may have felt also that it was a darned silly thing to go and stand in high grass.

When shooting from the line, or otherwise on the move, a mahout stops his beast dead for the shot, by the word *datt*, starting it off again by saying *myal*. Both commands accompanied of course by the necessary leg-work.

Shots from the howdah in a moving line are just "snap shots." For birds you never stop your mount, but for all animals the mahout usually halts the elephant on his own initiative. For a second or two the majority of trained elephants are quite rigid. With a lot of commotion in the line, or in the case of a *mêlée*, you can hardly expect absolute steadiness.

I remember a Bettiah hunt where there was at the end of the beat a sunken road fenced on both sides by thorns. I was placed as centre stop on the far side of the road. Lowis had himself seen a tiger enter the patch of grass to be beaten, which was not more than four hundred yards long.

The tiger was got on the move very shortly after the beat commenced, but no one saw anything except moving grass. It was a very queer tiger, going ahead of the line for a few yards without exposing itself at all, and then stopping. This was repeated time after time, and seemed for some reason to upset the elephants.

It was peculiarly irritating for the stops. We heard the shouts of the mahouts, and the trumpeting and trunk-thumping of the elephants. Every second we expected to see the tiger break covert, but nothing happened, beyond, after a few minutes, a further repetition of the same hide and seek game. The tiger was evidently looking hard for an opening through which to break back. At the same time, it took no steps to make one by a charge.

Lowis was afraid the tiger would slip out somehow, as the elephants were not playing up. He determined to "ring" it, and called me, with the other stops, to complete the circle. I had some difficulty in breaking down the thorn

fences, but got through both eventually, with my right and left stop almost on top of me.

I had a steep rise to manipulate. Just as my elephant's head reached the top, and while I was hanging to the hand-rail of the howdah to keep my balance, the tiger moved forward again. I could see it, but was quite unable to fire from the position I was in, and the elephant was on its knees.

As the elephant rose the tiger charged, striking out with its paws. Half a dozen of the nearest sportsmen fired. One, immediately behind me, with a heavy rifle with which I thought he had blown off my head. The explosion was deafening!

All the elephants were now very excited, and making a tremendous noise. The tiger stuck to mine, but although unhit, the hail of bullets had disconcerted it, and it had no real hold. My elephant was trying to get the tiger under its feet, and actually kicked it over on to its back.\* In this position the tiger tried to claw the old lady's belly, by striking upwards with its hind feet, but was unsuccessful.

All this time I was endeavouring to get a shot, but my wife and I were being shaken to bits. At last, leaning right over the side of the howdah, I got one, but the muzzle of my rifle was wobbling up and down with the elephant's movements, like a cutter in a choppy sea.

After this shot the tiger disappeared, sneaking somehow through the confused circle of elephants. We never saw it again.

Such incidents are very disconcerting. One never knows what the end may be. This I can best illustrate by the account of an adventure which befell Sir John Campbell in the Kumaon Tarai in 1912, when he was forward as a "stop," to a line of elephants beating a tiger up to him.

Sir John wounded the tiger as it passed him. The animal went on a short distance, then turned and broke back

\* I reproduce a picture of a somewhat similar incident in Nepal.

through the line. The beat was reformed the reverse way, Campbell joining the line. He had seen, more or less, where the tiger had gone into the long grass, and made for the spot, the line conforming to his elephant's movements.

As they neared the place Campbell heard spitting and cursing like the noise of an angry cat, but he was then too close to draw a charge from the tiger by using his shot gun.\* Therefore he told the man behind him to throw a bottle of barley water into the place where the noise came from.

Out charged the tiger, but turned to Campbell's shot and galloped down the line, where it clawed a small female elephant. After this it went off, and lay down near one of the "stops." This sportsman could not see the tiger, but directed Campbell to where it was. The latter, spotting it under some bushes, inflicted a mortal wound, just missing its spine.

Then the little elephant which had been scratched by the tiger (she was carrying a load of soda-water, as well as the man told off to keep it cool by wetting it) lost her head completely. Charging out of the line she went straight for the tiger trying to kneel on it, and butt it with her head. The result was that she got badly bitten in the trunk and mouth, while the soda-water man and most of the bottles were hurled into space.

Next she tried to roll on the tiger, with all her four feet in the air. A very thrilling spectacle for the line, which stood looking on, agitated but helpless. At the first attempt to roll she got the mahout's leg between her weight and the tiger. This snapped the limb in two. The mahout, poor devil, did not tumble off, as the other leg being hung up in the stirrup saved him from falling.

At the second attempt the elephant planted the broken

\* A sure way of making a wounded tiger charge, so as to get a fair chance at the animal.



*Photo, Hering and Higgins, Miami, C.F.*

**A WOUNDED TIGER MAULING AN ELEPHANT.**

*To face page 78.*





leg into the tiger's mouth ! As she got up the tiger came with her hanging on to the mahout's broken leg with its teeth and claws.

Then the tiger let go, and the elephant ran back to the line. But on the way she had another roll which left the poor devil of a mahout standing on one leg in the grass.

By this time the young female elephant was just mad with fear and excitement. As she saw her mahout standing there, she began to squeal, and throw out her trunk towards him, evidently meditating an attack.

Campbell got forward as quickly as he could. Realising however that it was impossible to reach the spot in time to stop her, he slipped a solid bullet into his rifle, and shot the elephant stone-dead through the temple.

Yet Campbell will tell you he is not really a good shot ! Perhaps he will say next that his brain is not apt to work quickly, or on sound lines !

This was a truly marvellous shot. Think out the whole situation, and the stirring incidents which occurred, one after the other. The suspense, the intense excitement, the spilt soda-water bottles exploding in every direction from the heat, the roaring tiger, the trumpeting mad elephant, the maimed mahout, and the line waiting for someone to act.

Then there was an instantaneous calculation to be made of where the elephant's tiny brain was, for a shot from above out of a howdah, instead of one almost on a level from the ground.

Sir John Hewett first told me of this extraordinary incident, and then I managed to drag the details out of Campbell. I am glad to be able to add that, although the poor mahout lost his leg, he was well and flourishing when Campbell last saw him in the year 1918.

One tigress with three big cubs at Bettiah gave us a great day's sport. She was in a very big strip of high grass

with fire-lines\* running through it at the western and northern sides. Beyond the northern track was a large area of scrub jungle covered with shortish grass and stunted forest growth.

Five of us were posted on the fire-lines, while the beat went a mile off to drive the tigress towards us. The tract of grass was so wide that Lowis decided to make three beats of it in strips, taking the western side first, and driving from south to north.

I was posted at the corner where the northern and western fire-lines joined, and had a clear view along each. The beat was a long time coming, for the grass was very thick and high. When the line was about two hundred yards from me Lowis "cooeed," and made signs that the tigress was on the move in front of him.

Then she charged the line with much roaring, but two or three shots turned her. Every second I expected to see the cubs break across one of the fire-lines. But nothing happened, and when the beat emerged on to the northern fire-line we agreed she must have managed to keep the cubs with her, and had taken ground to the east.

Back went Lowis with his line for the second strip. Another tremendous wait and we saw them coming through the sea of grass like little figures sitting on a hay-cart. Even the heads of the mahouts driving some of the smaller elephants could not be seen at all. The beat was a barren one.

The elephants were quite done, and we felt it would be impossible to do the third (eastern) strip without watering them. There was also the matter of our own luncheon, and Lowis and his wife were both looking fagged. The danger was that if we made much delay the tigress might either cross the northern fire-line in our absence, or move back into a portion of the grass already beaten.

\* A wide track cut through the grass to prevent a forest fire spreading.

## BEATING FOR TIGER WITH ELEPHANTS 81

After some discussion we agreed that as it was after 2 p.m., and very hot, the tigress was most unlikely to move to a flank in the stifling grass, but she might move forward. Lewis decided not to put about six of the youngest elephants into the beat again as they were quite cooked. We used them to watch at intervals the eastern side of the northern fire-line while we watered and fed.

For the last beat I was No. 1 stop, *i.e.*, on the right facing the drive. Four more were along the northern fire-line. Lewis brought the line along "left shoulder well up," to keep the tigress from moving to the strips on his left, already beaten. I realised I was not likely to see much, but that did not prevent me being intensely interested. On the eastern side of the third strip (*i.e.*, to Lewis' right) was the high bank of a dry river-bed.

When the left of the line was about a hundred paces from me, with the right of it well thrown back, the tigress began charging at the centre, so as to distract attention, and allow her cubs to get away. Lewis had a shot at the moving grass, but with no result.

Then she charged the left of the line near me with tremendous roars. She could easily have got round this left flank and escaped, but she was not thinking of herself, poor thing, only trying to save her cubs.

Soon after she retired from the second charge, the gun on the left of the line shouted to me to look out. Within a few seconds she bolted across the fire-line twenty yards in front of my elephant with a tremendous rush. I swung round like a flash and fired.

Almost as I pulled the trigger I realised it was not the tigress at all, but one of her cubs. It looked so big in its rush that I was quite deceived for the moment. Luckily I missed it. I *hate* shooting a cub.

Then came a bang in the fire-line to my left. The next stop had done exactly the same thing with another cub!

Fortunately he missed too. The third cub broke higher up, and was not fired at.

By this time the left of the beat had reached me, and halted on the fire-line. The poor old tigress was now hemmed in. A close line of elephants was behind her in the form of a half-moon for the right flank had been pushed on by Lewis.

In front of her a fire-line to be crossed bristling with rifles waiting for her destruction. At the north-eastern corner a loophole, but leading only to bare open ground. Moreover, and she probably knew it, there was the left stop keenly watching his left, and guns on the right of the beat ready to fire that side if she broke in the open.

Strange to relate she seemed to know her cubs were safe for she made no attempt to charge again. Once she came to the edge of the grass and looked out near No. 2 stop, who fired and snicked her cheek. Even then she did not speak.

As the inexorable line closed in she moved towards the centre, eventually bolting across the fire-line, with mighty bounds, between Nos. 2 and 3 stops.

Both fired, but she was too fast for them and reached the scrub. As she entered it she became visible to Jack Lewis. With a magnificent shot he hit her between the shoulders, and she dropped dead in her tracks.

Someone said another tiger had crossed into the scrub, and it was not a cub. Though ladies, men, and elephants were all dead tired, we made one line through it. The three cubs kept bolting like rabbits. They were quite big, and well able to look after themselves, which made one more contented. There was no other tiger.

This tigress had frightened the shikaris a good deal the day before. When going to look at the bait, which she had not then killed, they stumbled on to one of her cubs. The tigress roared, and the men shinned up trees very quickly.

Then she came out at one couple climbing the same tree, and nearly got the lower man.

This tale being exaggerated, as usual, led to the rumour in camp that she had *climbed* the tree! Tiger do not climb trees. They are much too heavy and quite well know it. A few words about tree-climbing in general may be of interest.

We all know that the lynx almost lives in a tree, because its favourite method of attack is to drop on its prey from the branches.

We also know that the small clouded leopard (usually less than six feet long, including a tail of about half that length) is entirely arboreal in its habits. Also that bear and panther climb trees with the greatest ease.

I have only heard once of a tiger climbing a tree, although I have known it make frantic efforts to get at a man in a tree. Instances have been recorded of a tiger "treeing" a man, and then waiting below to get him when he came down. This does not look as if the tiger thought much of its own climbing powers. At the same time I am quite certain a tiger could climb a tree quick enough if it had to.

The exception was told me by Sir John Hewett. It was the case of a man-eating tigress very old, emaciated, and shrivelled, and therefore light. The tigress had killed a woman, and was then driven off by villagers who placed the body in a rhododendron tree. When the villagers went away the tigress climbed the tree, and carried off the corpse.

Colonel Patterson gives\* us his experience of a lion climbing a tree. Elsewhere in this volume I tell the story of how Sir John Goodwin actually saw a wild goat (markhor) not only climb a tree, but walk along a horizontal branch.

I cannot think of any more tree-climbing incidents of interest, except one which relates to a *horse* climbing a tree!

The late General Sir R. Low was inspecting an Indian cavalry regiment, and with his usual thoroughness was

\* In *Man-eaters of Tslavo*, I rather think.

asking the history of each animal as he walked through the horse lines. The squadron commander being away, an Indian officer was giving the required detail.

They came to a nice bay mare, which Sir Robert admired. "Yes," said the *ressaldar*, "She is a well-bred mare and of a good stamp, but unfortunately she is mad."

"Mad!" retorted the general. "What do you mean? Is she not normal? Is she an awful handful in the ranks, or what?"

"Oh, no, *sahib*," answered the native officer. "It is not that, but last night she broke loose, and we found her trying to climb a tree!"

What had happened was this. Near the water troughs was a great big tree with a flatish trunk running out almost horizontally for a bit, and then sloping gradually upwards. About seven feet from the ground the tree had thrown out branches on which, at that time, were some new shoots. The mare had climbed on to the lower portion of the tree to try and nibble the young shoots.

On more than one occasion have I been "let down" by mahouts, when all the guns have gone forward as "stops," to enable their howdah-elephants to be used in the beat and so strengthen the line. I have already written fully on this matter \* and explained that no one but a *Sahib*—and a pretty masterful one at that—can keep mahouts in order, and see that they ride their elephants the whole time for all they are worth. Not even Samander, prince of shikaris and greatly looked up to and respected by all his own sect, could prevent one or two lagging behind, and thus causing a gap for the tiger to slip through.

I remember one occasion of a line wonderfully controlled by a forest officer alone in the centre; and remember it well because of two or three extraordinary incidents that mark the day for ever in my memory.

We were beating the Maler swamp near Dehra Dun in the

\* pp. 47 to 50.

U.P., and four of us went forward on a pad elephant to take up our places as "stops." On the pad we drew lots for the machans, and I drew number one which was looked on as a certainty, being on the direct line the tiger was expected to take. Moreover, being on the extreme right, I got a double chance of the tiger breaking out to that flank, or coming between number two "stop" and myself. This was the line the animal would naturally take.

The drawer of number four (extreme left) was a huge man, and perhaps not too pleased at the post he had drawn. Presently we reached his tree, and all three of us became convulsed with silent laughter. It was extremely small with a forked branch about eight feet from the ground on which two slender poles had been loosely lashed! No proper machan at all, and the tree impossible except for the lightest weight. I was regularly holding myself to keep from laughing out loud, when my mirth vanished like a shot on hearing a voice say, humbly and pleadingly:—

"I say, Nigel, old man, do you mind swapping places with me, for I cannot possibly, with my weight, get into that tree?"

As no one else offered, there was nothing for it but to acquiesce with the best grace possible. I may add, that in addition to my bitter disappointment at losing my good post I was never more uncomfortable in my life! The only way to sit facing the beaters was at the foot of the branch with my back against the trunk, the rest of the branch between my legs, and the poles utilised as stirrups. This gave me a half left frontage which seemed all the better (on the left flank as I now was) in case the tiger broke that way, but I had little or no hope of seeing any tiger at all.

The line came up quite close and I thought the beat was over, when a tiger suddenly lolloped out of the swamp on my *right* front, and only thirty feet away. How the "stop" on my right missed seeing it I never could make out.



It being impossible to "put up" at the animal from my position there was nothing for it but to slew round, changing my left foot over the branch between my legs. This sudden movement attracted the beast's attention, and it stopped short, growling horribly, to stare at the strange apparition in a tree. Being broadside on I planted a shot with my .450 Express behind its shoulder, and distinctly saw a red circle the size of a five-shilling-piece form over its heart.

The tiger made one half bound towards me, and then, changing its mind, continued up the slope in the direction it had been going. The slope was at least 150 yards to the top, and the going was fairly steep.

I have said the day was marked by two or three extraordinary incidents, but there were more than that. Firstly, there was the bit of luck in getting the tiger from the most unlikely machan of the four, after being "outed" from the best one. Secondly, there was the still greater piece of luck in not being charged, for the beast had me at his mercy. I should of course have fired my left barrel immediately. I had heaps of time to do so at a standing tiger, ten paces away, broadside on.

Ordinarily I should have done so, even at that period, when much less experienced. Now, I would never dream of hesitating. But that red circle so fascinated me that I could do nothing but stare at it, expecting every half second to see the tiger drop down dead, for it was directly over its heart. That was the third incident, namely, that the beast did not seem even to flinch. The fourth was the vivid scarlet spot so plainly visible, and which I have never seen on any other occasion. Of course I was at very close quarters.

Finally, there was the tiger's marvellous vitality after being shot through the heart. It had gone up a hill, and disappeared out of sight. As we got into our howdahs I was subjected to a great deal of chaff about what the others

were good enough to call my "scarlet bulls-eye, very similar to the red miss flag on the range!"

I was not too comfortable about it all, until in a close line we topped the slope, and fifty yards down the other side found the animal lying with its great head between its immense paws, but otherwise fully stretched out, and looking very magnificent even in death.

I have not much to add to what I have already written about driving tiger towards the guns by means of beaters. For this method I cannot do a sportsman a better turn, than to recommend him to read and digest all Mr. Best has to say in his book, to which I shall refer more than once.

There is one hint I can give though, and that is to be thoroughly prepared, before you indulge in this form of sport, to finish off the tiger yourself *on foot*, if you have not killed it. I refer to occasions when not a single elephant is available, which is sometimes the case. It is following up a wounded tiger on foot where the extreme danger comes in. You have by your shot changed a very much surprised and frightened animal into a perfect devil of a beast that sees red. Yet you are bound to finish it off; for, even apart from feeling, of compassion, you cannot possibly leave the poor unarmed villager and his family to the tender mercy of a dangerous animal like that.

Always wait at least half an hour, even if you feel sure you have mortally wounded a tiger or panther, and twice that period if you are uncertain. I think an abdominal wound is the worst one to compete with in either of these beasts, for the animal not only appears to lose no vitality, even if its stomach is half out, but it enrages it more than any other. Such a wound also seems to dull all feeling to the shock of further shots unless you hit an absolutely vital spot. When speaking of panthers later on, I give a typical instance of a female of that species when practically disembowelled.

When you are following up, take plenty of stones in your pocket to throw into every atom of cover, and under the aegis of your rifle or gun send picked men up each tree ahead of you, and to each flank. This should prevent surprise by a sudden charge from covert. For this kind of stalking I think lethal bullets in a 12-bore gun are best.

If you have hit the animal mortally, *i.e.*, say, in heart or lungs, you ought to locate it under a quarter of a mile. If not, it is a most unpleasant business. A very good precaution is to get hold of a herd of buffalo. They will follow the blood trail. I have never heard, authentically, of them actually attacking a wounded tiger, but they will certainly locate it for you.

## CHAPTER VII

### SITTING UP FOR TIGER

**H**ERE we arrive at the sitting-up-over-a-kill method of tiger shooting, about which diverse opinions exist. Some sportsmen like it immensely, others cannot stick it at any price. Two of the best shikaris I have known were Sir Henry Ramsay, the "King of Kumaon," and Herky Ross, who succeeded him as Commissioner of Kumaon. I daresay they had both shot well over a hundred tiger. Sir Henry told me he hated sitting up, and did not call it sport at all. Herky loved it. He said it appealed to him in every way.

The silence, the beauty of the forest, the calls of the bird tribe, the dainty tread of the deer as they saunter past the machan. Then the deathly stillness, and the flight of all living creatures, as the King of the jungle makes his presence felt. After that, perhaps the massive head suddenly manifest without a sound, where there was nothing before. Followed by the magnificent, striped lithe body, and slowly lashing tail.

All this was a perfect joy to Herky Ross, and he hated to end it by anything so prosaic as a bang from a rifle. Of a truth it is grand, very grand, and a matter of deep regret and much sadness to those who know they are never likely to experience it again.

Yes ! there is much excitement, and *if* the tiger comes

while you can see, and *if* you kill it, there is also immense satisfaction. But these conditions are not always fulfilled. Being much more cautious, and not half so bold as the panther, a tiger very often fails to put in an appearance until after dark. If you have a good rising moon (a waning one is hateful) it is a great advantage, but even then the shooting is most difficult. The animal itself may be plainly visible looking as big as a buffalo, but heavy foliage may prevent you seeing your sights. Altogether it is very tricky.

It is true there are plenty of devices to help the sportsman. An electric lamp fixed to the kill, which I have already referred to ; electric lights along the barrel of your weapon ; a luminous foresight ; a visiting card fixed with a rubber band near the muzzle, and level with the tip of the foresight ; white flour sprinkled on the rib between the barrels, etc. All I shall say about these is "Try them first on a dummy tiger"—I do not much care about any of them, but if your trial gives every satisfaction, you have reached Nirvana.

After much practice and patience I found the following plan gave me the best results in the dark. Put up the weapon *without* bending down the head to look along the sights at all. Point the muzzle at a spot you estimate to be about one foot *below* the mark you want to hit ; then press the trigger.

I tried this time after time from a low roof at a "dummy tiger," and was satisfied. It is absolutely necessary of course that the object be visible. It is no earthly use firing at any animal when you cannot even define its outline. I mention this as I have known men do it.

I once sat up three nights running for the boldest, most persistent and most gluttonous tiger I ever came across. A man climbed in to the hill station of Lansdowne early one morning to say a tiger had killed two big cows near his village thirteen miles below. Though hardly believing this

I went back with him, taking no orderly as there was a big Gurkha festival in progress. The orderly was to finish off his debauch, and follow me next day at dawn.

The report was quite true. Very close to the village a large cow lay on her back with broken neck and distended stomach. The carcass was uneaten. There were fang marks on the back of the neck, and two neat little punctures on both sides, showing the tiger had taken its drink of blood. The remains of the other cow were said to be in a jungle some half mile away. The footprints in the newly ploughed field showed the pugs of a large tiger.

At first it was quite easy to follow its tracks and the dragged carcass, but on entering the jungle of low scrub and grass (not very high, some three to four feet) the tiger had evidently lifted the cow over its shoulder. The villagers were so afraid of the beast that I could persuade no one to come nearer than fifty yards of me while I continued my investigation. I spotted shortly a little ravine, and making a short cut to it found the remains there. What astonished me was the amount that had been eaten in the short space of some eighteen hours. It was a very big cow for the hills, and quite three parts of it had clean disappeared.

When convinced that the tiger was nowhere about, some of the men helped me to move the remains nearer to a big tree where we constructed a machan. I then had some tea, and took up my position about 3 p.m. Nothing happened, and although there was a good moon the tiger waited till it had sunk behind a hill. That is to say, the beast came when it was quite dark, broke the rope and dragged the remains away. I could hear it all the time, but could see absolutely nothing.

The next day was a memorable one, for I had more excitement and was often in a greater funk than ever I can remember before or since. Looking all round at daybreak nothing of interest was to be seen, so I decided to get down, and find out what had happened to the kill. It was a beast of a tree,

and owing to dearth of branches low down I was much higher up than I liked. I had borrowed a .577 rifle which was very heavy, but luckily had a sling. Slipping this over my head I made the descent somehow, being quite shaky with my exertions when I reached the bottom.

Then I heard something, and the noise was not very far away. It sounded like a bone being crunched, and two or three times it came clearly to me, with intervals of intense silence. Evidently the tiger was still at its meal. With luck I might get a shot.

Trembling with excitement, and shivering with the early morning cold after my blankets above, I took off my boots and stalked very slowly and cautiously in the direction I had heard the crunching. The grass was not high enough to impede my view ahead, but it was very thick and rank, obscuring everything in its midst. With rifle at the "ready" I moved quietly forward, and was soon able to wind the carrion (which was pretty rotten), but could hear no sound of any movement.

The strain was beginning to tell, and my mouth became parched and dry. The rank grass made a silent advance most difficult, for it was very hard to keep balanced, when pushing one stockinged foot after the other through the entangled roots. My socks were now in threads, and the bleeding toes extremely sore, though I did not feel it much at the time. Meanwhile the sun had risen in my face, making it almost impossible to see without the shade of my head-dress, which I had left in the tree. And still no tiger!

I have no recollection of any inclination to turn back, but after going a couple of hundred yards, I was certainly getting very tired of it. Suddenly there was a rustle, a sweep of the grass, the most transitory glimpse of a black tipped tail, and I realised that the tiger had fled without a sound. I am not quite certain whether the feeling of chagrin or relief was uppermost!

Chagrin I think, for I followed at once after a hasty glance at the putrid remains, which I was not surprised to find (after the former gorging) very little eaten.

After going a short distance, the tiger had got on to a rough track which, a few hundred yards on, led through grass and some big rocks to a small ravine, with a limpid stream of beautiful water. This ravine ran at right angles to the track I was on, coming down from a main bridle path on the left which was about a hundred yards away. Standing on the bridle path was my orderly Sarabjit.

Having only just that moment arrived, he had not seen the tiger. In his hand was a very welcome tiffin basket, but before joining him on the big bridle path I had the drink of my life in that limpid stream.

It was now about 8 a.m., and sending Sarabjit for my hat I told him to warn the villagers to come to the kill at 2 p.m. to help us to pull it out of the depression where it lay, a very beastly job. Meanwhile I sat on the main bridle path, and had breakfast. Having regard to what follows, I may say that all the time I was in full view of the track the tiger had taken, of the bluff of rocks, and of the continuation of the tiger's track across the bubbling rivulet. Sarabjit was away a little over half an hour, and had a look *en route* at the first cow, still untouched, and the carrion I had just left.

When he came back, I told him we must go and sit hidden in the rocks facing the stream, as I fancied the tiger might return that way. Horribly hot it was, with a blazing sun, and no shade. Added to this discomfort was the fact that the wind having changed we kept getting a whiff of those obnoxious remains not so far off in our rear.

About one o'clock we heard the villagers approaching the kill, and an awful noise they made shouting, coughing, and calling out. Sarabjit behind me had risen, and I was just about to get up when without any warning an immense tiger's head appeared a few feet from us, followed by his



huge body bounding in one spring over the corner of the rocks into the little ravine.

The animal was so close to my left arm I could have touched it with my hand, and its smell was unmistakeable. My astonishment, however, was so great and the '577 so heavy, that before I could put it up the tiger was clean out of sight.

While I was breakfasting it must have returned to the kill some other way. All the morning it had been lying up a short way behind my back while I was facing in the opposite direction, waiting for its return ! When disturbed by the villagers' noise it made off by its old route, but as we barred the way it had to jump over us. The tiger made no sound whatever either then or at any other time during this three-day hunt.

That night I sat up again. It was difficult to decide which kill to select. I tried to get the two put together, but the villagers declined to play with them any more as they were too putrid. Moreover Sarabjit thought it would create suspicion. He did not know that tiger. Eventually I selected the kill from which we had twice disturbed His Majesty. The tiger went to the other, the fresh (!) one, and a good half mile away. It actually ate two-thirds of it!

I was so astounded at this that we looked next morning most carefully for marks of other tiger. There were none. We found the remains of the second cow in a deep narrow ravine, like a big ditch, leading up from the jungle, and not three hundred paces from the village itself. There was only one tree anywhere near. This tree was right in the ditch, and about the size of a big orange bush with very dense foliage. I crawled into it for my third vigil about 3 p.m.

The moon got up some four hours later. A great round full moon. Very shortly afterwards I heard the tiger coming up the ditch-like ravine. I tried hard not to quiver with excitement, for the whole tree shook at the slightest movement.

Unfortunately some bones had been left under the tree. For ages the animal sat there crunching them, and not ten feet from my legs. I could not see it, but I could smell it, and hear its stertorous breathing. The only thing I could discern in the tree was the luminous face of my wristlet watch, which I gazed at with a kind of fascination as the minutes passed.

Would it never come out ? The sweat poured off me until I was afraid drops might bespatter the tiger below. My legs were horribly cramped, the rifle felt a dreadful weight, and my back ached intolerably ; but I dare not move a muscle.

At last the grand creature stalked out, and a glorious sight it was in the brilliant light of the full moon. But although I saw it so distinctly I could not even see my barrels in the dense foliage of the tree. As the tiger approached the remnants of its second cow, the peg to which they were secured, or something, caught its eye. It stopped dead with cocked ears, and planted its fore-paws hard into the soft earth.

Thus the tiger stood with its head threequarters from me. Knowing I should be liable to go high, without any sights, I aimed low. Next morning we found the bullet between its two fore pug marks !

I climbed the thirteen miles home next day a very sad and dejected subaltern. Sarabjit and I never spoke a word. He had seen a good deal of what had occurred from his post in the village. His only comment after the occurrence was :—

“ I could have shot that tiger myself with a country gun ! ”

I have had no luck sitting up over live bait for tiger ; panther are a different matter altogether. As regards tiger, however, I have one most interesting and exciting incident to record.

In the late nineties when I was on the staff of the Meerut

division, the Royal Horse Artillery batteries were carrying out their annual gun practice on the banks of the river Ganges at Pur, forty miles north of our cantonment. This annual festival is of vast importance in the eyes of all gunners, and in no circumstances can any officer be absent from a gun practice parade. My reason for mentioning this will be obvious later on.

A horse-gunner, Wardrop\*, got information about a tiger in the bed of the Ganges, five miles from their camp. This tiger was very well-known, and many attempts had been made to bag it. Without success, however, for it lived in a swamp full of *phassand* (bog), which it was impossible to beat. Moreover as the swamp contained any amount of pig and hog deer, the tiger had no distance to go for a meal, and never touched the numerous cattle grazing on the banks of the river. At the same time footprints showed that the tiger took walks around ; this set Wardrop thinking.

Getting hold of his shikari he had two *machans* constructed about half a mile apart, on the edge of the swamp near a stream, and close to the tiger's "run." One was in a rickety tree outside the bog, and the other was made almost in the bog itself. This was done by digging a hole below the ground-level in a fairly dry spot, and roofing it over with a layer of tiger grass covered with sand.

Close to each *machan* was tethered a young buffalo as a bait ; so close indeed to the pit, on account of the ground, that the animal was, to all intents and purposes, directly above the hole. The occupant of this when he took his seat would be below the level of the ground and only able to fire in an upward direction, and immediately to his front. Some idea of the proximity of the bait to the pit can be

\* Now Major-General A. E. Wardrop, C.B., C.M.G., commanding the troops in Palestine, a famous pigsticker, and for years secretary of the Meerut Tent Club, where his annual organisation for the Khadar Cup was celebrated as a *chef d'œuvre*. Also author of that fascinating book, *Modern Pigsticking* (Murray, 1914).

gathered, when it is explained that the buffalo had to be shackled fore and aft (by leg ropes fastened to long pegs hammered into the ground) to prevent it treading in the roof of the *machan* !

At first nothing happened, for the tiger scorned the tempting bait. Wardrop underwent a good deal of chaff in the mess about his nonsensical *bandobast*, and the absurdity of expecting a tiger to remain in the vicinity of such a shell-ridden region as the target end of a gun practice range. He did not say much, it was not his way, but the baits went regularly to their tethering pegs in the evening.

Then one morning came the shikari, with a beaming face, to say that the night before the tiger's marks showed it had passed close to the bait near the pit, and the beast returning had evidently stood and looked it at for a long while before going off. The time for action had arrived. Wardrop chose an inexperienced youngster called Forman\* as his partner, and drawing lots for *machans*, the latter drew the pit. At this he was delighted for it looked a "sitter."

Now what follows is graphically described by Wardrop in his delightful book *Modern Pigsticking*, but as he is altogether too modest, and as I have lately been in communication with Colonel Forman regarding the whole incident, I shall relate it in my own way, although in parts I often use the latter's words.

The tiger came at 2 a.m. Forman was asleep. The noise awakened him, and he saw the tiger and the buffalo facing each other head to head. The latter was on its knees with its hindquarters still erect. The tiger had a paw on each side of the bait's withers, was roaring loudly, but not using its teeth in any way : acting with its fore-paws only. It banged the buffalo flat, first on one side, and then on the other, and without much apparent effort. It seemed non-plussed at its inability to shift its victim. This was impossible, because of the fore and aft tethering.

\* Now Colonel D. E. Forman, C.M.G., D.S.O.

Then Forman chipped in with a shot from his .303 carbine, missing the heart, but breaking the spine. The tiger reared up and fell over backwards and sideways towards the pit, where it lay bellowing, scratching up the sand and biting its own fore-paws in its rage.\* Forman was quite unable to get a bead on the wounded tiger, as he could only fire upward. Also being less than twelve feet from the bait itself, he was in a very awkward and dangerous position.

Half an hour elapsed. Forman did not like it a bit as it was, but there was much worse to follow. Suddenly he was aware of a footfall at his back, and an unmistakable smell of tiger. The footsteps were so unpleasantly near the edge of the pit that involuntarily he screwed round, and shrank away. It was a second tiger, or rather a tigress, and at any moment she might come through the fragile roof.

Luckily for Forman she was very suspicious. Round and round she walked in a small circle, but always keeping the buffalo between Forman and herself, when she got to his front. All he ever saw was a bit of her back, or a swish of her tail, as she passed the bait.

This went on for *hours*! Every time she got to the back of the pit in her narrow circuit, Forman was terrified lest she should place one foot on the roof, and fall in on top of him. One can hardly imagine a more terrible trial for the nerves.

Meanwhile the poor buffalo remained breathing, though incapable of rising. Anyhow it made no attempt to do so. Shortly after the tigress arrived on the scene, the tiger dragged itself on to the dying bait, and fairly bit and banged it to death.

At this time Forman could have fired at the tiger, but he frankly confesses, that the dread of its mate's prowling close to his pit with no possibility of shooting her, so put the wind up on him, that he had not the nerve to do it. And little

\* A wounded tiger in its fury at being incapacitated from getting at its enemy, often bites its own foot as it dies.

wonder. He realises now that if he *had* fired, the shot would probably have scared the tigress away, and saved him some hours of trepidation.

By 5.30 a.m. the tiger had dragged itself out of sight, and about 6.30 the tigress disappeared. It had been arranged that the shikaris, horses, etc., should be at a point some quarter mile from Forman's pit at 7 a.m. to enable the officers to gallop back, and change for the nine o'clock gun practice parade. A revolver shot at 7 a.m. was to be the signal that a wounded tiger was afoot, and this was duly delivered by Forman at the appointed time.

As nothing had happened by 7.30, Forman felt he must get a move on. Dragging himself out of his hole, like a jack-in-the-box, he trotted towards Wardrop along a game track which skirted the stream through high grass. He had not gone far before he came across the tiger stretched out across the path, and apparently dead.

Luckily Forman advanced with caution, for when a few yards off the tiger, the animal suddenly sprang to life with a roar, and came straight at him, open mouthed. But it could not charge properly for its hindquarters were paralysed. As Forman says :—

"It dragged itself along like a dog swimming. I pulled on it at once, but the only result was a misfire. Throwing away the carbine, I gave the tiger four 'rapid' in the face from my revolver, and bolted off round it through the grass. I ran like a hare, when I caught the path again, as it was getting so late. Outside the long grass, what should I see but my dependents legging it home for all they were worth, the syce last of all in difficulties with my horse.

"Fortunately my shouts stopped them, and the syce was sent off to fetch Wardrop. My nerves were in such a state by that time I could not have hit a haystack at five yards. On Wardrop's arrival we walked up the tiger, and he finished it off. We then went as hard as we could for parade, and

it was a mighty relief to find it had been postponed, for we should certainly have been late."

Such is the tale of as nerve-racking an incident as I ever heard of. It is typical of these modest gunners for Wardrop to say that his share was *nil*, that he was in no danger whatever, and had nothing to do but finish off a harmless tiger. As for Forman, he declares that his companion having arranged everything, and having finally killed the beast, really deserved the tiger. That, as regards himself—, all he had done was to win the toss, and sit in a pit opposite which the tiger was bound to come !

The hero of this amazing adventure (Forman) told us the tale shortly after the occurrence, at a dinner party at my house in Meerut. I have had therefore three accounts, but I would not mind a dozen more. I can still remember the rapt attention with which the whole table hung on his words, and I recollect also his two concluding remarks :—

*Firstly*, that on reaching his tent he rushed for the looking glass to see if his hair had gone white.

*Secondly*, that he never wanted to hear or see a tiger again.

The last sentiment did not last very long.

The advent of the tigress was an entire surprise to everyone. No one knew of her *existence*. She lived on for some years, and was once missed from a tree. Then, as Wardrop tells us in his book, Faunthorpe of the Indian Civil Service beat for her in a patch of grass near where her mate was killed. She dodged the line for hours, and then getting bored climbed on to a stack of grass to see how the hunt was getting on. Faunthorpe after much difficulty in keeping his elephant steady, at last got a bead which satisfied him, and shot her dead, it is said at a distance of two hundred yards. Any other sportsman would probably have missed her.

I knew Faunthorpe well, but never shot with him, except in rifle matches, when he often cleared the board. He is

## SITTING UP FOR TIGER

101

a very fine marksman, and a noted all-round sportsman, having shot most things, including a great number of tiger and panther.



## CHAPTER VIII

### MAN-EATERS

**A**S regards shooting tiger *on the kill* in the early morning, Samander, who told me the story, had a sad experience with a young gunner officer from Meerut.

This boy was only out in India for a short time, and he was most anxious to bag a tiger. Having heard of Samander, he sent for him, and explained his desire. It was arranged that Samander should tie up buffaloes, and wire to Meerut when one was killed. The young gunner, by train and ekkha\*, could get to the locality in a few hours.

In due course news of a kill by a tigress came in. The sportsman arrived at Samander's bivouac at 5 p.m. He wanted to go and slay the tigress immediately, but the old shikari explained that the kill was two miles away, and it was much too late. They must wait for the morrow. All the evening the boy worried Samander, until the latter at last reluctantly agreed to start an hour before dawn, and try to catch the tigress on the kill.

Just at dawn, when within a hundred yards of the spot, Samander slipped out of his sandals, and made the boy take off his boots. Cautiously they approached, and there was the tigress, lying asleep beside the carrion, with her head between her paws.

\* Two-wheeled country pony conveyance, wonderfully balanced.

Stalking up to within a few paces, the gunner raised his rifle. As he did so she got up, giving a broadside shot, but with her head turned towards him.

The boy fired, and shot her through the heart ; but she made one spring, caught him one fatal blow, and, as Samander described it to me, " There they lay dead together, the Sahib on one side, and the tigress on the other."

When looking at the baits in the early morning, you must be very sure of your rifle, and of yourself.

How often one is asked if it is reasonably safe to fire at a tiger on foot ? Of course it is, if you take ordinary precautions.

Any animal fired at, and especially a tiger, nearly always makes off in the direction his head is facing. Therefore it is *not* sound to fire at a tiger facing you, and it is always foolhardy to fire at dangerous game *above* you. A shoulder shot as a tiger walks away, or a good clear head shot, with a high velocity rifle of .360 bore or over, is perfectly safe.

The animal's psychology must always be taken into consideration. Fear engendered by close proximity to its enemy, man ; astonishment at the sound of the discharge ; alarm as to what may happen next ; dismay at the unusual occurrence ; and shock if wounded, all tend to make *flight* the first inclination of wild beasts fired at.

When followed up, it is a very different matter, and I have given a hint about this on page 87 when talking about finishing off a tiger that has been driven up to a *machan* by beaters, and wounded, but not killed.

Boucher, late of the Hampshires, had no qualms, as I have mentioned when discussing tiger-slayers. In some parts of India tiger are always shot on foot. When fatal accidents occur it is usually the case of a bad rifle, or a careless, foolhardy sportsman.

Colonel Joe Nuttall, who in the old days commanded the Scinde Frontier Force, shot one hundred and ten tiger

with a double-barrelled muzzle-loading rifle. It was his proud boast when recounting his adventures to say :

" And all on my two feet, sir. Every tiger I have shot, and I have shot 110, was killed by my D.B. muzzle-loader and with these two feet on the ground. None of your damned elephants for me."

To digress for one moment about this old warrior. Long after the absurd head-dress worn by frontier units had been discarded for the pith helmet, this conservative colonel insisted on retaining in wear the wonderful silver helmet of the Scinde Frontier Force.

The advent of visual signalling at last obliged the old boy to be reasonable. Each time he appeared in the field every helio in the force was turned on to this blazing-sun-of-a-hat. To such an extent, that its owner was nearly blinded, and had to take refuge under a tree, until such time as his blasphemous commands could be communicated to the offending signallers !

Man-eating tiger are fairly common in India. The theory usually advanced is, that decrepit old age, or a bad wound having incapacitated a tiger, or tigress, from killing game, it turns in desperation to man. Finding man a very easy victim, the practice is continued. But it is also a peculiar fact that certain districts are more prone to man-eaters than others, which looks as if the habit was passed on in some way. Perhaps inherited ?

It is also a fact that man-eating tiger are often emaciated and very old. One was shot by a forest officer near Bhowali (below Naini-Tal) which had been seen to *claw its victim to death*. The reason for this horrible deed was, that when the tiger was killed it was found to have no teeth.

Sir Bindon Blood has shot three man-eaters, *i.e.*, proclaimed ones. The first he killed in 1877, in the low hills east of the Ganges. This was a male, which had run a porcupine quill up from the sole of its right fore-paw, and thus crippled that leg entirely. This tiger was a regular

fiend, and had killed over two hundred people in about three years.

The second was a tigress which had killed twenty or thirty people in a few months, including a very good friend of Sir Bindon's, the head-man of a village. A peculiar fact about this tigress was that she had two families. One of three nearly full-grown cubs, and another of two cubs, a good deal younger.

The third man-eater was a very big male tiger in Nepal. It did not regularly hunt men, but delighted in killing them when they crossed its path. It naturally held up the countryside, for it travelled long distances and was very cunning.

Reverting to the question of certain districts acquiring an uninviting reputation for man-eaters, it is quite likely that in these cases the vice is hereditary. A man-eating tigress may quite reasonably teach her offspring how easy it is to kill men. In this way human beings may become an acquired taste with the cubs at an early age.

Pilgrim routes are very often selected as giving an ample and continuous supply of human meat. Unlike panther, or the lions described by Patterson,\* a tiger does not hunt near homesteads for its human food, but prefers a road. Or it may seek its victim from isolated individuals cutting grass, or picking up sticks in the forest.

There is an area in the Kumaon hills, with its centre near Mornaula (twenty miles from Almora and on the direct road to Western Nepal) which has enjoyed a most unsavoury reputation for man-eating tiger and panther for a number of years.

So long ago as the early eighties my old orderly Sarabjit, with a dozen other Gurkhas, shot a man-eating tigress there. They had a long and exciting hunt, eventually killing her with a *volley* from ten govern-

\* *Man-eaters of Tslavo.*

ment rifles, on which they had fixed their bayonets! Her head and skin adorn the mess of the 3rd Gurkhas in Almora.

Not very far from Mornaula (at Muktesar) another man-eating tigress took up her abode about the same period. An old British soldier, a pensioner there, and married to a hill woman, eventually got rid of her by inserting poison into the body of her last victim. The poison was given the pensioner by the "King of Kumaon" (the late Sir Henry Ramsay).

In the year 1912, Tuck,\* of my old regiment, had a very exciting experience with a man-eating tiger at Mornaula. This beast had killed about two hundred people in a couple of years, and there was a government reward of a thousand rupees for its destruction.

Tuck went out and lived in the staging bungalow at Mornaula, where he found two officers of the Gordon Highlanders bent on the same errand. No human being had been killed for some days, but a cow or two had been taken.

Tuck does not say so, but I expect it was a case of the same difficulty in getting any assistance from the local villagers, as happened to me so often. Anyhow, *khobar* about these cows never came in until too late, and so the Highlanders had not got a shot.

One would naturally suppose that, especially where a man-eater was concerned, the inhabitants would be all out to help. However, in this particular district the exact opposite was always the case. Not only were the villagers supine, they were even actively obstructive. The explanation is that, being absurdly superstitious, these foolish people believed the *spirit* of the man-eater would haunt them, and bring in its train all kinds of woes and misfortune. So one had literally to fight for one's information.

It was agreed that the three sportsmen should join forces. With great difficulty they procured some young

\* Now Lt.-Col. C. H. A. Tuck, C.I.E., 3rd Gurkhas.

buffaloes as "baits" for the man-eater, and Tuck's Gurkhas scoured the country for *khobar*. Lots were drawn as to who should sit up over the first "kill," whether man, cow, or bait. Tuck drew the winning number.

The next evening each of the three sat up all night over a live bait. Nothing happened. Three miles beyond Tuck's tree two of his men put up in a village. As the cows were being brought home along the road a tiger jumped on to one from the bank above, and killed it.

Tuck was on the spot by eight o'clock next morning, and found marks of *two* tiger. A machan was made in the only available tree, a very small one, on a steep bank above the kill. The bottom of the machan was only some ten feet from the ground. The bank was close to the back of the machan, but this bank was quite an unlikely line of approach for any tiger.

At 3 p.m. Tuck took his seat, and at 6 p.m. (the time of year was the rainy season, July) two *langurs* (big grey monkey) began cursing, and continued to do so for a couple of hours. This was a sure sign there was a tiger about.

It was now very dark, for although there was a good moon the sky was overcast with clouds. Tuck was lying down, with his feet towards the bank, peering through his loophole at the kill, and wishing the moon would appear, when he heard stealthy movements, and then saw the bare outline of two forms. One went to the kill, and began its meal. The other (the man-eater) came below the *machan*, sniffed continuously at Tuck, and then, putting its fore-paws on the tree, shook it!

Tuck could not see the beast, but was considerably upset by the shaking. The moon giving no sign of any appearance, was useless. Tuck, noticing that the kill was gradually being pulled out of sight, thought it was no use waiting any longer. He fired at the dim apparition near the cow, and both the tiger bounded away.

Tuck cursed the moon, cursed his luck and cursed his shooting. Then he ate his sandwiches and felt better. Next came a cigarette, and he was preparing to snoodle into his blankets for the night, when he heard a very stealthy movement *above* and *behind* him.

"Gosh! It must be the man-eater!" thought Tuck, "coming back for me." And so it was!

Nearer and nearer it approached, coming diagonally down the bank. Tuck was now kneeling up in the machan, with his rifle ready. He could smell the brute, but although he stared and stared into the darkness, he could see nothing.

Every moment he expected the man-eater to spring into his machan, and the beast could not be more than a few feet from him. A cloud shifting, Tuck thought he saw an outline, then it faded away. Was it imagination? No! There it was again. Anyhow, this was too much for human endurance. Although he could not see his barrels, Tuck up with his rifle and fired.

Bang! Crash! And off went the tiger. Tuck did not know whether to be sorry he had missed in the darkness, or glad that the beast was no longer at the tail-end of his machan. He thinks the latter.

Then it began to rain hard. The patter on the leaves drowned every sound, and besides not being able to see, Tuck now could not hear either! As the man-eater had returned once after a shot, it might, very likely, come again.

This thought was harassing. For hours Tuck knelt up in that machan, like a little boy saying his prayers, and peered towards the bank. Ears and eyes were strained to the uttermost to detect the slightest sign of a third approach. When the first streak of dawn appeared, there was no happier man in the Kumaon hills than Tuck!

The man-eater continued its depredations for many months. Its late experience with Tuck made it abnormally

cunning. Parting from its companion, it went on gaily killing humans, but it never returned to a kill. Eventually a sportsman from Naini-Tal circumvented it, and gained the reward.

The circumvention contained a certain element of luck, and of a surety a large amount of pluck. The hunter was going to inspect the last victim's body. Looking for tracks, *en route*, without knowing it he passed close to the man-eater's lair. But what he did know very shortly afterwards was that he was being stalked himself !

He took the matter very calmly, and leisurely proceeded up a steep and narrow lane with a turning near the top. Beyond the turning he moved quickly off the path, and knelt behind a tree, ready. When the man-eater showed itself round the corner, he fired and killed it. A great sportsman that.

When shooting in the eighties with Hercules Ross in the Kumaon Tarai, he told me of a man-eating tigress of Chakrata, which had always eluded him. He had sat up for her on several occasions without success, and sometimes over the dead body of one of her victims. She had been seen often, was of great age, particularly bold, and extremely cunning. She seldom returned to a kill. This is often the case with man-eaters.

One hears of many extraordinary experiences with tiger, but the circumstances in which B. B. Osmaston\* shot his first two, beat all I have been told, or read of. The first concerns this very man-eating tigress, for he was in a forest school camp above Chakrata when the incident occurred.

Osmaston, who knows not fear, and another young fellow-student, armed with bored-out Snider rifles, went out shooting near their camp. Being fresh from home, their thoughts, in any jungle, turned on tiger. Seeing

\* Mr. B. B. Osmaston, C.I.E., Chief Conservator of Forests, Central Provinces.



an old woodcutter, they asked him what sport could be got. The old boy told them that a native had been actually taken out of his hut the night before by this celebrated man-eater. He pointed to a ravine in which he said she was living.

Osmaston walked down one side of the ravine and his friend the other. They had not gone very far when Osmaston heard a "wauf, wauf," and saw the tigress on top of his pal. She had been stalking them, while they thought they were hunting her! Just throwing up his rifle at a tangled mass of student and tigress, Osmaston most fortunately shot her through the heart. Crossing the ravine, he found the other boy unconscious, and the tigress dead. The boy recovered.

About a year or so later, Osmaston was in a forest rest-house, and just about daybreak heard a tremendous uproar in the jungle beside him. Jumping out of bed, he snatched up his hat and rifle, and mounting to the neck of his elephant posted off in his pyjamas as hard as he could, calling out for his mahout to follow.

Arriving at a clearing a few hundred yards away, he saw a tiger and a boar fighting. What was stranger still was the sight of the whole sounder of pig sitting on their haunches, in a circle, looking on. The sounder disappeared immediately, and so did the tiger. The boar, being very badly mauled, was also crawling off when Osmaston shot him, and getting into a tree told his mahout to take away the elephant and return in an hour. In twenty minutes the tiger walked into the clearing, and Osmaston bagged his second.

Encounters between tiger and boar often take place. I fancy the tiger generally wins, but instances have occurred when the dead bodies of both have been found, not so very far apart. In one fight I know of, the boar had ripped open the tiger's stomach with its tusches.

An old C.O. of mine, Colonel Hugh Rose, had a tantalising

experience regarding one of these battles. Stalking in the jungle with his Gurkha orderly alongside an unfordable river, they were suddenly aware of an appalling din in the grass on the opposite side. It was quite impossible to cross, but a short way ahead there was a big tree, which might help matters for a view.

Climbing up with the help of the orderly, Rose found he could only see the dust of a combat, but the sounds left no doubt in his mind that it was a tiger and a boar fighting. The orderly climbing higher called out that he could see both combatants, and that the boar was nearly beat. Rose tried to follow him, and found that his man, monkey-like, had crawled along a bough until it was well bent over with his weight. To join him being an impossible feat, Rose had to be content to sit where he was and receive an account of the battle from his orderly, which ended in a victory for the tiger.

With a shooting party it is the custom for the person who gets the first hit on an animal to be awarded the trophy. This is sometimes varied. In the eighties, when seventy-five per cent. of sportsmen used the .500 Express for big game, there was so much squabbling as to who *did* draw first blood, that the Superintendent of the Kumaon Tarai changed the rule. At his parties lots were drawn for all trophies at the end of the shoot.

It was not entirely satisfactory. Indeed, I heard that from one of these shoots a man who had not touched a tiger at all was seen to go away by train with a fine skin, in the same compartment as a fellow guest who had actually killed this particular animal single-handed, but had nothing to show! The skin was smelling very high, and the lucky owner had placed it in the bathroom of the carriage. Much to the annoyance and discomfort of the unfortunate slayer!

Nor is the first hit always pleasing to the whole party. I know of a man who was awarded the only tiger in a

shoot, when his bullet just snicked the tail near the root. Some men running a camp arrange the first evening that any tiger or panther shot shall go to the sportsman responsible for the first *mortal* wound. This is not ideal either, for it is sometimes very difficult to ascertain which is the first mortal wound.

Taking everything into consideration, and in spite of the possibility of some jealous shooting and wild shots, first blood is the best arrangement. Jack Lowis had this rule, and ran it very soundly, as he did most things. When several shots had been fired at a tiger bagged, he held an impromptu committee of those not concerned, but who had seen the happenings. This committee with himself presiding made the award. The president, being the most generous of shots, usually ruled out any claim of his own.

## CHAPTER IX

### PANTHER (OR LEOPARD)

**M**UCH that has been written about tiger applies equally to panther (or leopard), which are the quickest, boldest and most stealthy of the feline tribe. Discussion has taken place for years regarding the distinction between a panther and a leopard. I think I may say it is now generally recognised that all panthers and leopards are but a collection of big cats of the same species, which differ only in minor points. For instance, the forest bred panther is darker, more richly coloured and bigger than the rock loving animal of the open country. Bigger, too, than the audacious dog snatcher of the hill station, who often has a darkish ground colour like many hill leopards. Jungle folk will tell you, and I believe it is reliable, that all of them interbreed.

As regards size, if the young sportsman shoots one which measures seven feet between pegs,\* he should be very pleased with himself. A biggish leopard in the hills, that is one which looks quite large before you shoot it, will probably measure some inches less. The largest I ever heard of was recorded as over nine feet. Even supposing this was *not* between pegs, but along the curves

\* See page 13 for ideal method of measurement.

of the body, the difference of a few inches still gives a very magnificent specimen.

I have always thought the most beautiful of this species is the snow leopard (*Felis Uncia*). Time and again have I tried to bag a specimen, but have never even seen one in the wilds, though I have hunted for them over many a snowy range. Some of our men in the 3rd Gurkhas, when two companies were operating near Thibet in the late eighties, got a young one. We reared it and sent it off to the Zoological Gardens, London, but it died in Calcutta *en route*.

The snow leopard is a game hunter pure and simple. I have never heard of it attacking man. It has a gloriously thick fur of pale yellowish grey. Although the body is covered with dark spots these are varied by regular rings of the same darkish colour. Its tail is abnormally long and bushy. One magnificent specimen, measuring over eight and a half feet, was shot in Chitral.

When I talk of there being no *thikana* about a tiger, I may say there is still less about a panther. The audacity of the animal is frequently inconceivable, at other times its suspiciousness is beyond belief. I can illustrate this best by two examples.

Riding from one camp to another with a mounted orderly one winter, I was met about half way by a villager who complained that a calf of his had just been killed by a big panther, which he and his sons had hunted away. My rifle being ahead, *en route* to the next camp, I sent the orderly after it, and went with the man to look at the kill. This was not half a mile from the road, and nothing had been eaten.

Sending the villager to remain at the road itself so as to meet the orderly, I sat under the shade of a tree close to the calf and smoked a cigarette. In about ten minutes the panther walked up to the kill and attacked the entrails. I could do nothing but sit and watch the beast!

At the end of half an hour it was disturbed by the arrival of the orderly with my weapon and made off. Taking the rifle and loading it, I sent the two men away to the road with instructions to talk as they went. In less than twenty minutes the panther returned, and from my original post under the tree I laid it out. It made one leap in the air and fell over dead.

On another occasion the kill was a pony, lying beside a stream, and the killer was supposed to be a tiger. I thought otherwise when I saw how the entrails had been cleaned out. The local people strongly disagreed with me, and one man said it was a huge beast, and he had particularly noted the stripes. He also narrated how he himself had seen the "tiger" leave the remains, and he pointed out the direction in which it had gone.

Others backed him up, and they got very excited over the whole matter. They told me the "tiger" was an old friend of theirs; came every year about this season and killed cattle; was extremely cunning and suspicious; always looked up into trees near the kill, etc. I still thought it was a panther, but no doubt a very crafty gentleman. The only pug mark I could find was a wet one on a stone in the stream. As it was almost obliterated, it was very hard to make much of it.

There were two suitable trees, one in the direction the animal had gone, and one on the other side of the stream. I chose the former, for in case it did look up, I was unwilling it should get the chance of catching sight of any odd movement during its approach. This was a nice tree, too, with a good thick trunk to hide my body and the *machan*, into which I climbed before 3 p.m.

After a short vigil I heard it coming from my left rear as I had expected, for that was the direction it had been seen to go when leaving the kill. Splendid, I thought; now I've got it. Nearer and nearer the beast came, and

I was greatly delighted, until squinting to the left I found it was nothing but a large peacock.

This was sickening, for it simply meant the panther was not anywhere near, or the peacock would have been away with a loud cry, instead of picking up dainty morsels near the remains of the pony.

As I was watching the beautiful bird, spreading out his tail with much conceit, something caught my eye eighty yards off and nearly *facing* me. Almost immediately I saw clearly that it was the head of a big panther looking in the direction of the kill, round the trunk of a tree!

Keeping very still I watched. In ten minutes the head sank, but was still distinctly visible. It might have been a rock, it was so motionless. Could I be mistaken?

I was sorely tempted to move my right hand very quietly and reach for my glasses. But I refrained, for I knew it would be madness. Besides, had not the head been higher up before? This meant that the panther was lying down now behind the tree, with its eyes fixed in my direction!

There the beast remained for *sixty-five solid minutes* by my wristlet watch. Flies came on my face and hands, but I could only puff at them. Sweat rolled down my cheeks, and tickled abominably. My right foot went to sleep, but it had to remain numb. Large beads of perspiration stood out on the back of my hands, and they just had either to dry up of themselves, or serve as a bath for the horrible flies.

It was a sort of trial of patience between us. Suddenly the head disappeared. With such a suspicious gentleman I was not very hopeful. Surely it would have come forward had it not actually seen me? If it had, it was unlikely to return at all. Anyhow, it was on the move somewhere, and I could carefully wipe my face and re-arrange my foot, before it began perhaps to peep round another tree!

After half an hour I heard something behind me. Soon it developed into a soft footfall, and now and then a pebble was dislodged. Any moment I expected to see its spots to my right or left.

I pictured to myself its stealthy walk, head erect, ears rather thrown back, mouth slightly open, with lower part of the lips drawn down showing the dark slimy sides of its furry tongue.

I had leisure to picture this several times, too. It was ages before the beast came into sight from almost under my tree, and walking boldly up to the kill, stood still with its fore-paws on it. I was strongly tempted to wait and see what it would do next. Then I remembered its suspicious nature, and I gave it a raking shot, which dropped it where it stood.

Besides its boldness, the chief characteristics of the panther are : (a) its marvellous quickness, and (b) its amazing power of concealment. A tiger is pretty wonderful at either, but a panther can beat the former every time. Let me give an instance which exemplifies both.

I was shooting with those good sportsmen, Sutherland of the Public Works Department and Charlie Nichol of the R.A.M.C., in the Sawaliks. It was the time we had the trouble with the *makna* (tusless male) as mentioned under elephants.

Nichol went out with a shikari at dawn on a pad elephant for an hour or two to stalk chital (the spotted deer). At 11 a.m. he had not returned, and we were due to start out then with the line of elephants. A few minutes later his shikari turned up on foot to ask us to come out and bring a sun hat for the Sahib !

It appeared Nichol had seen a big female panther sitting up like a cat on a forest drive. His shot went low, and she bounded off; roaring, into some very short grass, her entrails hanging out. Waiting a little, Nichol mounted



his pad elephant to pick her up. On approaching the grass out she charged, and off went the elephant!

Making another attempt after a time, much the same thing happened, except that the elephant putting its foot in a hole stumbled so badly that the shikari and Nichol were thrown off the pad on to the ground, the latter's helmet rolling almost into the panther's mouth! Luckily she retired again to her lair, but Nichol was tired before catching up the elephant, and sent the shikari to camp to fetch us.

We found him sitting on his pad elephant under a shady tree with a cheerful face, and his bald head covered with scratches. Pointing out to us the bit of grass where she lay, which covered a little mound, we said no panther could possibly be there, as there was not enough shelter to hide a hedgehog, let alone a panther. Nichol, being hungry and tired, got rather cross, and said that anyhow she had charged from it twice, and would probably do so again.

To humour him we formed line for the patch of grass, with Nichol in his own howdah. Between Sutherland and me was a young pad tusker, at which, as we neared the mound, the she-panther charged, getting one set of claws in its ear, and one in its near thigh. This pulled the tusker right down to the ground, squeaking loudly. Then the beast relaxed her hold, and disappeared out of sight.

I still have the image of that charge quite clear in the vision of my eye. It was like a lightning flash across our front. The long body, with a horrible something hanging loose, the snarling jaws with bared teeth, the slanting ears, the wicked eyes, and the fore-paws, with claws exposed, pressed back on each side of her mighty jowl, as she hurled herself through space at the wretched tusker.

Although it was only a flash, we all three fired one shot,

if not two, before she was on to the elephant, and felt sure one shot at least was responsible for her disappearance. In that surmise, however, we were wrong. With the grass less than three feet high, and actually seeing her drop off the tusker, still we could not find her for some little time.

Then an elephant parting the grass close to the moaning youngster was prevented by its mahout from stamping (an elephant will always stamp on a dead animal, if not stopped by its driver) on to something, and we saw the spots of the richly tinted coat. She was quite dead, but there was no mark on her except the one wound I have described.

When we had stretched her out I felt so sorry for the plucky creature. There she lay dead, who, but a few hours before, had been so full of life and vigour. She had fought to the last ounce, and actually died in her final effort to reach her enemy. At times I think there is something very beastly about shooting.

Hill panther become a regular pest, and play havoc with the dog tribe. It is not bad fun sitting up in the evening for dog-snatchers, or any other kind of panther. If the bait is a live goat, you must be careful to get into your place, and be well concealed, before the goat is brought up; otherwise it will not bleat. I have known men very successful at this kind of sport, getting three or four panther in one summer. A very sharp look-out is necessary to enable you to bag the panther before it gets the goat. It often comes close up and walks round, or lies down, eyeing its victim. The final rush is very quick indeed.

At the time my wife's father (Patterson) was Collector \* of Saharanpore, an amusing and, for him, rather an annoying thing happened regarding a panther and the sacred cow. We were three guns, a boy called Coopër, a lively and quite inexperienced young subaltern of British cavalry,

\* Chief Magistrate of a civil district.

our host and myself. One day there was (1) a tiger kill, (2) a panther kill, and (3) a very good chance, from information received, of shooting a panther over a live bait. We drew lots. Patterson drew the tiger kill, I drew the panther, and Cooper the live bait. Patterson returned at dusk, having had no luck, and met me on the confines of camp with the dead panther. There was no news of Cooper.

We waited dinner until 9 p.m., but there was still no sign of him. It was after eleven o'clock when we heard his cheery voice. Climbing down from his elephant, he ran into the dining tent, saying he had been having a splendid time, "a very good show."

Recounting his adventures, it turned out that a *chuprassie*\* sent with him had been unable to get a goat as live bait. Cooper was in the depths of despair, until, spotting a calf, he said that would do very well. The *chuprassie* should, of course, have tried to explain this was impossible, as the beast came from a Hindu village. Either he failed to do so or else Cooper—who did not know a word of the language—failed to understand him.

Recovering a little from our dismay, we asked if he had got a shot?

"Oh, rather!" said Cooper. "The panther came just before dusk, a very good show."

"Where is it?" we cried. "Have you brought it with you?"

"No, I am afraid not," he replied, gulping down his soup, "for, to tell you the truth, I missed the panther and shot the calf, but it was a very good show!"

Poor Patterson, thinking of the reports that would be spread far and wide, about the tyranny of the Collector Sahib, almost wrung his hands, and looked the picture of woe. Young Cooper, sublimely unconscious of all this,

\* Messenger attached to officials.

wolfed his fish and entrée in the highest spirits, continually ejaculating, "It was a very good show!"

After a considerable pause, Patterson inquired in the most gloomy tones what he had done with the carcass, hoping, I think, that the *chuprassie* had retained sufficient sense to have it buried deep.

"Dear me, sir, the calf is not dead!" said Cooper. "I bought four annas' worth of grass, which it was munching quite happily when I left!"

Altogether it was an expensive shot for Patterson. The *chuprassie* was summarily dismissed next morning, in the most public way possible, to indicate to all the severe displeasure of the Collector Sahib!

In his book I have so often mentioned, Mr. Best gives an amusing description of a novel method of bagging the village panther over a live bait. With the help of men watching the goat tied up under a lantern, the *Sahib* can dine quietly at home, and shoot the beast between courses. In this case the poor goat is killed by the panther, the *Sahib* warned, and the panther then frightened off. Only to come back and be shot, when the shikaris have disappeared, leaving their master in the *machan*. Mr. Best acknowledges he has never tried this plan!

In many ways the panther is more akin to the domestic cat than the tiger. I have never heard of a tiger playing with its kill, but I have actually seen a panther do so. Only the other day, when Major C. Steele wrote to me about the way a tiger killed, he mentioned this tendency on the panther's part—anyhow, with smaller prey. He had actually witnessed a panther's attack. The animal jumped right on top of a goat without hurting it in the least. Then let it go, and as the goat got up, knocked it over with its paw. Goodwin tells me how he has seen a leopard play in the most fascinating way with its *dead* kill.

I was sitting in a pit once near the edge of some jungle

over a live goat, for a she-panther which had been taking a lot of sheep from the herds which grazed all round. About 4 p.m. she came with a tremendous rush, and bounding right over the goat, fetched up behind a tree. All I could see was her tail lashing to and fro. After waiting quite two or three minutes (evidently gloating over her victim), she made one bound which brought her about a foot short of the goat, with fore-paws stuck forward, until she had her elbows on the ground, stern raised, tail stiff in the air, teeth bared and ears cocked forward instead of laid back. Just as I had a bead on her, she made another bound right over the goat, and disappeared the way she had come, leaving the goat gazing at her tracks.

I was quite nonplussed. My first thought was that something had alarmed her. Then, after a minute or two I distinctly saw her eyes gleaming at the goat, with a most malignant and scintillating look in them.

She was just inside the jungle, about twelve feet from the bait, and by the position of the eyes evidently crouching down, preparatory to another rush. Curiously enough, I could not outline her head, but the eyes were extraordinarily vivid, and I aimed between them.

On pulling the trigger she disappeared without a sound, nor was there any further movement. I found her shot through the brain, and lying where she had crouched. She was quite small (6 feet 1 inch), with a very dark, richly tinted coat, and apparently about two years old.

In the year 1920, and within two miles of my flagstaff in the hill station of Dalhousie, I was lucky enough to get two panther with only a day between. It was an extraordinary piece of good fortune.

The first had killed a cow, and the man coming in rather late, I went out at once, and sat up until dark over the carcass, but nothing happened. The next day I sent out two young officers, who saw the panther at a distance,

but without getting a shot. Being very keen, they remained in the *machan* all night with no result. I fancy the animal had spotted them.

Not very far off was a hillside covered with rocks interspersed with jungle, which I felt sure was the beast's abode. Anyhow, it seemed good enough to put on grass shoes, and stalk about there on the chance of getting a shot. With this in view, on the following day at 2 p.m. my orderly and rifle were sent forward to wait on the road near this hillside, while I was to follow on horseback an hour or two later.

About 3 p.m. the orderly returned with the announcement that he had seen a large tiger on a rock, as I have previously narrated. When I went back with him he showed me a large rock, about five hundred yards away, on which he said the "tiger" was lying. There was no animal there, however, for my glasses swept the whole of it.

The poor orderly was very disappointed and unhappy, but somewhat comforted when I said we would carry out our original programme, which took us close to the large rock. Making a long detour, we stalked from a ridge down the spur, of which this huge boulder was a marked feature.

Very slowly and quietly we crept forward, about twenty yards between us. Half way down I heard a click of the tongue. Moving towards the Gurkha, I saw him standing behind a bush gazing at something below with a petrified stare.

Joining him at once, there indeed was a large panther lying on the very rock he had first shown me, and not more than eighty yards away.

It is not a sound thing to shoot at any animal lying down. It has always been most repugnant to me, the least reason being that one is very apt to miss. Another fact much worse is that you may only wound. This panther

was lying directly below us, facing away and gazing into distance. It was almost a knife edge shot.

While holding the rifle ready I sat down, and thought out the situation. If the animal heard anything, it would slip over the rock into the jungle and disappear. It was quite unlikely to stand up, turn round and look at us. My rifle was very powerful (.400—.450, high velocity), and if I could put in a raking shot with a .400 explosive bullet, it would be very deadly. So I took a very careful aim and fired.

The panther jumped round, and taking a bound our way was out of sight in a second, behind a jutting-out portion of the big rock. "Missed," said the orderly, but I did not agree. Creeping cautiously forward, I saw presently a lot of blood not far from where the beast had been lying. There was a tree close at hand, up which I sent my Gurkha, but he could see nothing.

A further careful advance over very rough ground, and I spotted the panther's tail. Directly below me was a fissure in the rock some three feet across. Crane as I would from my side, I could see no more than the tail, so I had to jump the crevice. From the other side the panther was plainly visible, and was lying dead.

Two days later another panther took a goat out of a flock about two miles away, in a different direction. I went down to the place with the informant, and found two men watching the kill, which was half in a stream below a landslip, with heavy jungle all round. Tying one leg of the dead goat firmly to a rock, and selecting a path about fifty yards away from the kill, and opposite the landslip, I sat there. But first I got the men to screen me with branches, and then disappear to their village, talking all the way. In half an hour the panther appeared at the edge of the jungle near the landslip, but high up and a hundred yards from the kill. While hovering over a shot,

as it was a long one, the beast turned in its tracks, and disappeared in the jungle.

A nice sort of idiot I called myself, and thought the panther had probably spotted me. In a few minutes, however, it reappeared much lower down, walked very majestically to the edge of the landslip, and had a good look round. This was another chance of a shot much nearer and broadside on. But I was enjoying myself, and wanted to see what it would do next. After a pause the beast scrambled very slowly down the landslip, and sat on its haunches, facing me, just above the kill. This was great fun and most exciting, but I thought I had better fire or something might frighten the panther away. The shot got it in the breast and it jumped about twelve feet in the air, beating its paws together and roaring. When I got across, it was quite dead.

A panther's call is very peculiar. It is exactly like the sawing of wood. One often hears it in a forest camp, sometimes in the evening, but more often in the early morning, long before daylight. The panther "talks" a good deal more than the tiger.

The latter I have only known to do so when charging, or in the mating season, when both sexes at times make a grand noise calling each other up. Samander gave this period as October, but I have only heard the calling in the late winter, say February. This season is very favourable for shooting, as a tigress will *allure* several male tiger.

Sarabjit used to tell me that the tiger's ordinary call (not roar) was a sharp cry. Once he made me laugh when walking home at dusk, and a sambar (*rusa unicolor*) gave a "bell" close to, by saying it was a tiger. In later years jungle folk have corroborated this; indeed, have been very emphatic about it. At the time I took it as a joke, and the poor orderly was rather hurt.

After Sarabjit's statement I was intensely interested



to read what Mr. Best had to say on the subject, and learn that he thoroughly believed in the tiger's ordinary noise being a sharp bell.

Deer frequently call when a tiger or leopard is on the prowl. The time of Nichol's adventure with the she-panther, he had been drawn to the spot by hearing a chital (spotted deer) call repeatedly.

Sitting one summer evening in my verandah at Mussorie, I heard a khakar (muntjac, or barking deer) barking furiously about half a mile below my house. Getting rifle, field glasses and orderly, I went down the hillside, and the Gurkha soon spotted a small panther. She was in some light undergrowth a few paces away, but, I personally, could see nothing whatever of her.

The orderly became very excited, and was quite annoyed with me when I calmly got out my glasses and sat down to look for her. However, I felt sure she would not move if she thought she was well concealed. Searching hard, at last I spotted a patch of yellow with black spots, about the size of my hand, in the middle of some bracken. What part of the animal it was I had not the faintest notion, and when I put down the glasses I could discern nothing at all.

Studying the spot again, I found there was a V-shaped twig, just below the spotted patch, which I could see with both glasses and the naked eye. Firing at this with my .303, out came the little panther with a roar straight at us, but I had hit her too badly for her to charge properly, and the left barrel finished her. The patch was her left thigh, and the bullet entering there had come out at her right shoulder. She was a beautifully marked little female just over six feet long.

A man-eating panther is much worse than a man-eating tiger, for it combines the most amazing boldness with the greatest cunning, and a truly wonderful aptitude for concealment. It has been known to enter a house and

take a person out of it, after lying up in grass, less than a foot high, with people continually passing within a few feet. One infested a district near Almora for a long time, and though its list of victims was very large, no one could bag it for years. It became notorious after I left, but at least one officer of the 3rd Gurkhas spent many periods of leave trying to shoot it.

Captain Shuttleworth, of that battalion, a keen and good shikari, was particularly active and zealous, but this panther simply played with him. Bolting off to a kill, to sit over the body, he had a horrid conviction, on more than one occasion, when approaching the spot, that the beast was stalking him! After an all-night vigil without any success, he would hear the panther had killed another woman in the early morning ten miles north. Rushing over to the new venue, he would sit up again over a corpse hardly eaten at all, and the man-eater would kill ten miles east. There was a large reward offered for its destruction, and the scourge was disposed of eventually by a sportsman from Naini-Tal.

Panther do not like water and will never swim if they can help it, though doubtless they can do so. Tiger, on the contrary, like swimming. In Bettiah we had beats every year on a particular island, which contained everything a member of the feline tribe could possibly wish for. In five years I saw myself, about twenty or thirty tiger on that island alone, but never the sign of a panther, although on the main land adjoining the river there were plenty.

No animal can climb a tree easier than a panther, and I have often heard of their doing so. Tiger, on the contrary, as I have already mentioned, do not climb, though I knew of one which, springing to some height, pulled a man out of a tree. I have heard of many other similar cases.

One peculiarity more about panther occurs to me. They

appear to desert a kill if hyæna take possession of it. On two occasions a couple of these loathsome beasts presented themselves when I was sitting up over a panther kill, and in neither case did the latter appear. Samander assured me this always happened. I had such confidence in him that afterwards, if the well-marked pug (with fore-feet much larger than the hind) of the hyæna was visible round a kill, I never took the trouble to sit up.

A horrible brute is a hyæna, with its dirty colour, tawny stripes, malformation of the hind legs and sordid mane. An arrant coward, too. Meeting one on a narrow path once, I gave it a charge of No. 8 shot in its posterior as it turned, just to see what it would do. It did not even snarl. Making a rush, I finished the brute off with the other barrel.

A pad elephant meeting me later, we picked up the hyæna on our way home, as I wanted to show it to Sarabjit. We arrived at dusk, and my orderly coming to the pad, and seeing a portion of the striped skin, thought it was a *tiger*! When it was thrown down and he realised what it really was, he called it the most dreadful names, and kicked it!

Dear old Sarabjit; I often mourn for him, and wish so much his bones had not been burnt in Chitral. He would have liked so greatly to die in his own beloved country of Nepal.



*To face page 138.*

**BETIAH SHIKAR ELEPHANTS CROSSING THE GANDAK RIVER TO THE ISLAND.**

The author in the second howdah from the right



## CHAPTER X

### ON THE SUBJECT OF BEARS

**T**HERE are four species of bear in India, (1), The Brown (often called Red) (*Ursus Isabellinus*); (2), The Himalayan Black (*Ursus Thibetanus*); (3), The Sloth (*Ursus Labiatus*); (4), The Malay (*Ursus Malayanus*).

In a series of sporting articles on India some years ago in *The Daily Graphic*, "Old Shikari" told us that the Himalayan and Sloth bear were curiously misnamed. That the latter was a particularly wide awake, active, bad tempered, malicious beast; and that he could not imagine why the Himalayan black bear was called *Ursus Thibetanus*, when he is common in the Himalayas, but very rare in Thibet!

He added that the latter animal was a savage brute, very dangerous, and often known to attack without any provocation. He quoted Kipling's *The Truce of the Bear* :—

"From brow to jaw that steel shod paw, it ripped my face away."

Experiences differ; mine have been that the sloth bear is a timid animal with poor hearing and worse eyesight. It is generally very quiet until wounded, and then it makes the most appalling row. Of course when brought to bay it will fight with its claws and teeth, and fight hard, going for the face. A peculiarity of the sloth is its enormous lips, giving it not only great powers of suction, but enabling it to propel

wind out of its mouth with much force. Very useful in its daily quest for insects and white ants.

The Himalayan black bear is a nasty fellow to meet suddenly round a corner. Of course it is really as much frightened as you are, but its fright may take the form of a sudden rush, and a claw at your face. I feel convinced that the numerous cases one meets of natives mauled by a bear have occurred owing to a sudden and unexpected encounter, when the bear was just as terrified as the man. Sometimes of course it is a case of a she-bear nervous about her cubs. When wounded, the Himalayan black bear often goes straight for its enemy. A big bear (say over six feet high, standing up) with its enormous coat, great mouth and formidable teeth looks a perfect monster, when about to attack.

The brown bear, on the other hand, does not usually go for man in any circumstances. I have only known one case of it ever threatening to do so. This happened in Kashmir to a very great friend of mine (the late General Vincent Ormsby) with a big brown bear, that had a very bad reputation. Indeed the shepherds made out that besides killing their sheep regularly, it was continually chasing one or other of the herdsmen.

Be that as it may, Ormsby, having got *khabar* of its whereabouts, went to look for it. After searching a big nullah, he was about to leave when the shikari said he would like to have one look more, from a vantage point some hundreds of yards away. Ormsby sat down to smoke a pipe, with his rifle between his legs. He was at one end of an isolated narrow feature about a hundred paces in length.

After a short while, Ormsby took his alpine stock and began walking up and down to keep warm, leaving his rifle where he had been sitting. As he turned the second time at the far end of his beat, he saw a very large brown bear walk on to the spur, and stand between him and his rifle.

At the same time the bear winded Ormsby and rushing towards him got on its hind legs with forearms extended high over its head. Ormsby thinking it was all up called out, "You brute!" and raised his stick for one smack at the beast. To his immense relief, when just short of him, the bear turned off and scampered down the hillside.

I am now going to make a statement which may bring me in a letter or two from my friends, but I cannot help that. It is as follows :—

Except by some extraordinary accident, and provided he takes ordinary precautions, and is properly armed, no sportsman ought to be killed by a bear, even when following up a wounded one.

The Himalayan and sloth bear although savage enough, especially at bay, are not very quick. They present an easy mark at close quarters, and rarely charge home unless wounded. Still one knows of many fatal encounters, usually due to foolhardiness, or lack of experience.

The first that came to my notice was the case of Farquharson of the East Surreys, who was killed in the snows above Almora over thirty years ago. But he was not a sportsman, and did not care for shooting, though he took out with him, for his expedition in the mountains, an old snider carbine. No one knows what happened, but he left his tent in the evening, carrying this carbine, and shortly afterwards a shot was heard by his servant. The latter looking for his master just before dark, found his cap and the rifle, with an empty case in the chamber.

All round were marks in the snow of a struggle with a bear, leading to a precipice about three hundred feet above a river. There was no blood. Men were collected next day, and the river and all places round searched thoroughly, but without success. The locality was many marches from Almora, but men of the 3rd Gurkhas went out on getting the news, and found Farquharson's body two miles down the river in a cleft of rock. The iced water had so preserved it



that the party was able to bring it all the way into Almora for interment.

The second case was that of a man called Pike, following up a wounded bear on a hill track with a deep drop below. Going hastily round a corner without any precautions, the bear, which was waiting for him, rushed out and knocked him over the edge of the precipice. The third was an unprovoked attack on a fine old sportsman, a Mr. Gibson, near Dehra Dun. He was walking home from shooting, and a bear suddenly charged him from a thicket. He was not, I believe, carrying his rifle or gun. There are many more instances I know of, one being a case of a rifle jamming, but all showed lack of ordinary care and forethought. For example, you would not for choice shoot at a bear *above* you.

The main diet of all bear is fruit, honey, roots, nuts and sometimes grain. The brown (red) bear and the Himalayan black bear kill sheep, goats and, occasionally, deer. Both will eat carrion. They are particularly fond of all kinds of fruit and grain, and will assemble in some numbers from long distances for mulberries, the wild raspberry, apricots, Indian corn, etc. They have the most wonderful instinct for knowing where these abound, and are the most luscious. The black sloth bear of the plains is just the same, but its favourite food is honey and white ants.

The late Sir Henry Ramsay (the "King" of Kumaon) told me that, when they had a flight of locusts one year in Kumaon, he shot seven bear before breakfast in a valley ten miles from Almora. It appears a swarm of locusts does not rise until the sun comes out. As the sun never touched this valley, on account of its aspect, the locusts remained, and bear finding this out came in strength to eat them.

Once at Lansdowne a man came to tell me his village was infested with black bear which had come to eat the wild raspberries. He said there were *hundreds*, and that several men had been mauled. I went out with another

officer (the late Major Arthur Bateman-Champain, 3rd Gurkhas) and we got four or five before breakfast. There certainly were a great many, but we only saw one wounded man, who had the whole front of his face torn off.

I had very few rifle cartridges, and for the last beat had only one left. A bear shuffled along a spur opposite me at a good pace, and about 150 yards away. Below me was a precipitous ravine. Not making sufficient allowance my bullet caught him behind, in the liver. He stopped, stood up, leaned against a rock and made the most appalling noise, like a child shrieking. At the same time he rubbed his stomach with both fore-paws.

Champain was a long way off, after a wounded bear. I had a shot gun with some No. 3 cartridges, and although the ravine looked very difficult to manipulate, I felt I must go and finish him off. I couldn't stand that howling. My orderly tried to dissuade me, saying it was asking for trouble. Manœuvring to get above the bear, I gave him both barrels in the head at ten paces.

He just went down a few feet, and made more noise than ever, but did not attempt to charge. Getting within five paces I fired two more shots, which finished him. When skinned, his skull looked like a plum pudding. Surprisingly few pellets had penetrated into his brain. I had not then learnt the trick of making a shot charge into a veritable bullet by cutting the case all round at the thick wad below the shot, just leaving a snick at each side to prevent the end bit breaking off before firing.

The bear has a very thick coat. In brown bear the hair is sometimes eight inches long on its back, with thick woolly under-fur. The body is proportionately small. It is very easy to wound a bear slightly, and then an enormous quantity of lead may be required to kill it. The first wound seems to numb the body to all further shock.

The brown and sloth bear see very badly, nor do they hear well. This is not the case with the Himalayan black

bear, which has good hearing and sight. The sense of smell in all bear is remarkable.

A good brown bear may measure seven feet, a good Himalayan black bear six feet, and a sloth bear six-and-a-half feet, between pegs, from snout to tail. I have never seen the Malay bear, but he is much smaller. The male brown bear is much bigger than the female. This species hibernates from early winter until about April. The Himalayan bear does so partially, and the sloth bear not at all, though he lives mostly in caves.

Every youngster should try and bag a brown bear. It is a very fine trophy. Kashmir, Kulu, and Chamba are the best places. His Highness the Raja of Chamba sent me to his best preserve in the year 1920. I saw a great many. The limit is usually one, but I was allowed two.

The evening I got to the ground I was told a brown bear had been seen that morning, about two miles away. Although I was very tired, I thought I ought to go and look for it. The distance was a very long two miles indeed, but I was rewarded by seeing the bear. As it was a female I left her alone, for I wanted two big males.

I had decided not to go out the next morning, and had informed my orderly and shikari accordingly. At dawn, however, it looked so perfect a day, that getting hold of two village shepherds, I took my big rifle, and climbed the hill above our camp.

On the top of the hill it was so grand that I went on further and further, but I sent back one of the men for my teabasket and some food. Round a corner we came on to a succession of large clearings, and on one of these I saw a large male brown bear, delving amongst big stones.

I had the wind right, but to get near enough to shoot I had to go down a convenient ravine, and approach him from the opposite side. Otherwise I could not get a close shot, because the ground was so open. The first thing to do was to deposit the coolie somewhere, and in such a

place that he could stop the second man bringing the food.

I did this to my satisfaction, and then dropped down the hill. I have always found it very difficult to hit off the right level, after a climb or descent, so as to appear just where one wants to. One generally fails to go far enough. This time I went a bit too far, and emerged below the bear instead of opposite to him.

Creeping back I went up again under cover, and got very winded for the altitude was over 11,000 feet. This time I came out just right, and within less than two hundred paces of the bear. Then I watched him through my glasses, as he turned over the stones for grubs and ants. He was a very fine fellow, and it was a most interesting sight.

Presently he began to get uneasy, standing up once or twice, sniffing about a good deal, and looking my way with very blar eyes. I knew he was too dim-sighted to see me, but, the wind having changed, he had got my scent. I was prepared to fire at any moment, but his way to the tree jungle being partly in my direction he helped me considerably by shuffling along towards my right front.

When he was less than a hundred yards off he stopped for a second, and I pulled the trigger. He dropped at once, but my shot had gone high and I had only "spined" him.

Poor old chap, I was very sorry. I went down and told him so, as he lay moaning on the ground. Although I talked to him quite close, he made no attempt to go for me. Then I had to finish him off. That is the beastly part of shooting.

When I called for my coolie, his companion with the tea-basket turned up too, and I breakfasted near my old friend the bear. One man was sent then for a dozen coolies to carry my victim to camp. At least twenty turned up about 3 p.m., and by the fuss and noise they made the bear might have weighed a ton.

After they had departed I walked on for an hour. I

had now such a following of orderlies, shikaris, village head-men, etc., that, as it seemed useless looking for anything, I turned back by the road the male bear had been carried.

I was leading, and as we turned a corner I suddenly spotted a female brown bear quite close. She was feeding down towards me in a re-entrant, and I dropped at once to watch her. She was about 200 yards off, and by my glasses I saw she was very old with a magnificent ruffe almost white.

Still I was only allowed two brown bear, and for my second I wanted another male, they being so much bigger than the females. Closer and closer she approached, until when about sixty yards off she got our wind, and turning in her tracks bolted up the ravine like a great, fat, red bullock.

Now I cannot shoot for nuts at running game with a single barrelled rifle, but many can. At least I cannot hit animals moving across me (and until this occasion I did not know I could do so "going away"). Here was a chance of testing the matter again.

Reaching out for my .280 Ross, I drew a bead and fired when she was about 150 yards off, knowing I should miss her. To my astonishment, and rather to my disgust, she dropped to the shot, and rolling over and over stopped on the path below, quite dead.

This was really a great nuisance, for my cook was ill, and I could not move camp. For five days I had to wait with brown bear all round me, and unable to shoot another. There was one male as big as a mountain, and I saw him three or four times. Of course had I been very anxious to shoot that female, I should most certainly have missed her!

This was the second old female I had bagged, for I managed to get one some years before in Kashmir when walking up a ravine one evening for exercise with an ordinary coolie.

I generally seemed to have more luck by myself with a coolie, than when accompanied by an expert shikari !

There was nothing very exciting about this hunt, but there was plenty of anxiety about finding her after the shot. As I went up the glaciated stream of the ravine, I spotted an old she-bear feeding about eight hundred yards above me with a cub beside her. The wind was behind me, so moving on a little I went up to the right and then towards her, getting within a hundred yards. She was standing up eating berries, and the cub a few yards away pushing about under stones, which he turned over one by one.

Getting behind a bush I sat and watched them a little before firing. On pulling the trigger the old bear gave one cry, and disappeared absolutely. The cub, not knowing where the sound of the shot came from, scampered off in my direction and passed me within a few feet going at an astounding pace for a bear. He looked so comical in his haste that I couldn't help shouting "shoo," in the midst of my laughter, as he went by.

I then followed the old lady and found a blood trail leading to a glaciated mountain cleft. This cleft ran down into the little river below, up which I had walked, and joined it very close to where I had left the coolie. Near me, in this glacier was a great hole where the ice had fallen in. Then continuous glacier, a hundred paces or so, to the stream. There was blood some distance above the hole, but none very close to it. A few paces ahead was a precipice, also above the same stream I had originally traversed.

I shouted for the coolie, but on arrival he said he had seen nothing, as he had remained under the rock where I had put him, until he heard my call. In spite of there being no blood near the hole, the supposition was, of course, that the bear, alive or dead, had got into this hole, which might be the head of a channel open all the way down, and again might not. Sending the coolie along the glacier

outside, he reported there were no more holes at all right down to the stream, and that he could see no bear actually in the water at the bottom.

I always carried a stout cord in the hills, some twenty feet long and about the thickness of a good clothes-line. (It was generally wound round my waist, or put in my ryper-sac. It is a tip worth remembering for you may often need it.) The coolie was now peering into the hole from the edge nearest us, but could neither see nor hear anything. Making him sit where he was I tied one end of the cord securely round my waist, and giving him the other to hold tight, and dole out, I got into the hole. I found I could walk along fairly well, bent double, and that I was in running water. There was no obstruction, and therefore the ice that had fallen in had gone down to the little river below. I did not propose, however, to follow it the same way for a hundred paces, and the cold being intense got out as soon as I could.

Not quite trusting the coolie, I walked down the glacier to the stream, and hunted about there. No bear to be seen. She must be somewhere under the glacier I thought, and was very sick for I did not see how I could possibly get her, and it was the first red bear I had ever fired at. Moreover it was now becoming dusk, and I had to move back to camp.

In the lowest spirits I started home. Round the first corner, in the main ravine, and just below the precipice I have mentioned, it was necessary to cross the stream. As I hopped from boulder to boulder I put my alpen stock on to what appeared to be a moss-covered stone. To my astonishment it was quite soft.

A sudden inspiration came to me. Slipping into the water well over my knees, and hanging on to a big boulder with one hand, to prevent being swept away, I grasped the moss-covered stone with the other. To my delight it was the stomach of the old she-bear !

She had evidently got as far as the precipice and then fallen over. The exit hole of the bullet wound was clogged with tissue which accounted for the stoppage of the blood trail. Next morning early we took poles and ropes, fished her out of the icy-cold water, and brought her into camp.

Now to hark back to the Chamba shoot. As I was obliged to stay on where we were camped after I had got my two brown bear, I amused myself stalking some without firing. My wife and the servants had several times seen a she-bear and cub, about eight hundred yards from camp. Getting up very early one morning I approached them within fifty yards, having the wind right. They were pushing the stones over, as usual, for ants and grubs. When mamma found a tit-bit she would give a kind of mew, and the cub would run over to her and guzzle it. Creeping back I made a détour, and gave them my wind. The mother had her nose in the air in a second, and, calling the cub, they both disappeared into a ravine full of undergrowth.

Now to sum up about bear in general :—One may truly say that though very shy the brown bear is easy to shoot, and quite harmless. I have never known him attack. The Himalayan black bear is a savage beggar, and will charge right home if wounded. The sloth bear is timid, as a rule, but will attack on provocation, or when hit. Being deaf, sleepy and poor sighted, this bear is often stumbled on by villagers, when it flies into an ungovernable rage and rushing at the poor native, claws his face to rags.

Of course there are unusual occurrences, as there are exceptions to every rule. Ormsby's case seems to show that even a brown bear may attack. Mr. Gibson appears to have been charged by a Himalayan black bear, without any provocation whatever. Sir Bindon Blood, in Nepal, shot a big black bear which was reputed to be a regular man-eater.

As regards sloth bear, Sir John Goodwin I fear disagrees



with me, and agrees with "Old Shikari,"\* whom I refer to at the beginning of this section. Sir John does so with reason, for he was once regularly chased and hunted by a sloth in the very early morning, when he could not see the sights of his rifle. He naturally calls him "a most damnable aggressive and vindictive beast !"

Perhaps never having been charged by any bear—and I have shot a good many—I think too little of their ferocity. But I was brought up badly in this matter, and I cannot better end about bears than by explaining what I mean.

When in the Cheshires stationed at Solon, in the year 1884, the "Queen's" were about ten miles off at Subathu. There was a major in the battalion whose name I forget, but he was a great shikari, and the hero of a then recent Kashmir incident. It appears he had made a heavy bet that he would approach a sleeping black bear with such cunning, as to smack it on the buttock with his hand. Then he would shoot it.

The man with whom he wagered was also a determined fellow, and was resolved he would see the major carry out his project. They started for Kashmir together, and hunted about for a black bear. The major being very active dragged his companion up hill and down dale for days, but the latter would not give in.

I believe the major won his bet, but I cannot vouch for it at this length of time. The tale was the talk of the mess, and the effect it had on me, at a most impressionable age, was to give me a poor opinion of the bear as a dangerous adversary.

Again, perhaps it was the manner of my first meeting with the Himalayan black bear.

My orderly Sarabjit and I, having been out after *ghoral* (Indian chamois) since 4 a.m., were returning to a little bungalow in the jungle about noon for breakfast. A mile or so short of the bungalow, and a little out of our line, was

\* Lt.-General H. D. Hutchinson, C.S.I.

a small patch of swampy ground which often held a wood-cock.

As I knew Sarabjit was very hungry I wanted him to get back, but felt I should like to take home a "cock." Therefore I gave him my rifle, and putting some No. 8 cartridges in my pocket, shouldered the gun, and branched off to the ravine I had in mind.

This ravine was in fairly thick forest, and after walking over the wet ground in vain, I made my way through the jungle on to the spur which would take me home. The spur itself was mostly clear of undergrowth, though covered with oak trees.

I had just reached the ridge of the spur when I heard a lot of grunting above me, and the sound of something big breaking through undergrowth. Almost immediately two black bear appeared on the spur, and turning my way came along at a great pace.

I had never seen a bear before except in the Zoo, or a performing captive. One of the two above me looked simply enormous. Just a great black mountain of hair, with an ugly snout, and wide mouth full of teeth.

When about fifty paces away, having winded me, they both stopped short and stood up on their hind legs. The male was then really a terrific sight. When he put up his front paws with a quick motion above his head, he must have measured well over eight feet from the tips of his fore-claws to the ground.

I was so taken aback that at first I was paralysed with funk, and simply stood still staring at them. The male's quick motion with his paws restored me to life. As I brought my gun down to the "ready," I remember wondering what sort of hole a charge of No. 8 shot out of a 20 bore (say, a foot from the muzzle) would make, when the first bear charged home ; whether the other bear would come at me too ; and finally, whether I was to achieve the distinction of killing two bear, right and left, with No. 8 shot.

Fortunately for me I was not called upon to make the experiment. My movement with the gun seemed to startle the beasts, for getting on to all fours they scampered through the jungle into the ravine I had just left.

I do not pretend that I was anything but immensely relieved. Still the incident caused me to lose any respect I may have felt for bear. I still think they ought to have come for me! They had taken me by surprise. They must have seen I was powerless from funk. They had the advantage of being above me, and they were two to one!

I only know of one case of two bear being killed with a single shot. Jack Campbell managed to do this a few days after he performed the hat trick with tiger, as I have already recorded.

He fired at a black bear going away from him. Unknown to him she had a cub sitting on her back. His bullet went right through the cub into the mother, killing both.

## CHAPTER XI

### BUFFALO, BISON, YAK AND RHINO

#### BUFFALO AND BISON :—

**I**F I were to begin again in India, the first big dangerous game I would try for are buffalo and bison (neither of which I have ever seen), for they must give grand sport. The former is getting rare, and the present-day sportsman may have to go as far as Assam (where are the best heads) or Burma for his quarry, but it is easy enough to find that out in India. From all I have heard, a double-barrelled .450—.400 high velocity rifle, with a solid nickel bullet, is the smallest bore it is *safe* to use on a buffalo. When you think of an animal sixteen to eighteen hands high at the shoulder, inordinately bold and savage, with a head carrying horns that measure, in a good specimen, some nine to twelve *feet* from tip to tip across the forehead, you can feel you are up against something big. There is actually a *single* horn in the British Museum which measures 78½ inches.

The bison (also called *gaur*) is not so rare, nor is it usually quite so big as the wild buffalo. At the same time, some very big bull bison have been shot. Animals running up to eighteen, nineteen, and even over twenty hands, at the shoulder. It is often to be found in most of the large forest tracks in the hills of India, Burma, Assam,

etc. Unlike the buffalo, it is shy, and often stays away in the furthestmost hills.

So much for the grandest animals of the cloven hoof, though there are others, such as the mithun\* (*gayal*), a smaller gaur of Assam, Cachar, Burma, etc. ; the banteng (*tsine*) of Burma ; and the yak of northern Ladak and Thibet. The last is a queer-looking animal, sloping away above the hips, and carrying a huge tufted tail. It is often domesticated and interbreeds with tame cattle. As it inhabits the coldest mountains in the world, and in captivity is used as a beast of burden, great things were expected of it for transport purposes, in the last Thibetan expedition. It quite failed, however, and the mule again proved itself the king of transport animals in mountainous country. A *yāk* may be good for one march or most useful when halts of two or three days duration are frequent, but is quite incapable of carrying loads day by day.

Hugh Rose, of my old regiment, the 3rd Gurkhas, was dead set on shooting a *wild yāk*. The only way to do so from Almora was to get into Thibet.

In those days (the year 1888) this country was very strictly closed to any white man by the Thibetans. District officials, called *Jong-pens*, watched the border near all passes, and were most difficult to evade.

At the same time there was then no official prohibition by the Government of India against sportsmen entering Thibet. This came later in the time of Lord Morley, who had no sympathy with travel or sport. He forgot, with his somewhat narrow view and intense dread of complications, the enormous advantage to be gained by encouraging adventurous spirits to visit unknown countries.

In the eighties, however, so far from the Indian Government prohibiting entry into Thibet, it was possible to

\* There is some doubt as to whether the mithun is a genuine wild beast. It is certainly domesticated in Assam, and even in the wild state has bred freely with tame cattle.



A BISON SHOT BY SIR JOHN GOODWIN.

*To face page 144.*



obtain a permit from Simla, saying there was no objection. A huge vellum document covered with red seals.

Unfortunately this document was not viewed with any respect by the Thibetan border officials. It all depended on what interpretation they put on their last orders from Lhassa.

An additional obstructive factor was that these orders took months to reach their destination, and were vaguely worded. It happened very often that a hint from Lhassa, dated, say, May, to the effect that sportsmen might enter Thibet, did not get to the Jongpens until October, when several officers had been chivied away, and the passes were soon to be closed by snow.

I forget whether Rose had a permit or not, but he was helped enormously by the Almora deputy-commissioner and a retired native political agent at Milam called Pandit A. K.

Rose reached Milam in July, which is on our side of the "Utta Dhura" pass into Thibet (about ten marches north of Almora), some 18,000 feet above sea level.

After a few days' halt at this little frontier hamlet of Milam, he pushed on over the pass, only to be rudely repulsed on the other side by the local Jongpen. This official told him he could not possibly proceed, and argument being quite useless, Rose, after a good deal of altercation, employed cunning.

He told the Jongpen that he was sorry to find it was no use, that Thibet was a beastly country, and he would have nothing more to do with it. He added that he was going to return at once to Almora, and it was his sincere hope he would never see the Jongpen's face again.

Rose went back three or four marches along the Almora route. Then he spent a week or two growing a beard and hunting barhel. Finally he made preparations to attack the Utta Dhura pass again.

First of all he sent his servants, camp equipage, shot

K



gun, and all extra and superfluous baggage back to Almora. Then he procured blue goggles, long felt boots, heavy Thibetan coats, and paggeries for himself and his Gurkha orderly. The barrels of his .500 express rifle were carried in turn, pushed into one of the felt boots ; while the stock was strapped up the back, inside the coat.

Thus disguised and with only one blanket tent apiece, they passed safely and unrecognised through Milam, with a couple of coolies sworn to secrecy. Thence they pushed on undisturbed, over the pass and into Thibet.

The orderly did all the cooking. There was not much to cook, for they lived mainly on *yāks'* milk, procured from nomad caravans, and chaupattis, with an occasional pheasant which Rose had to shoot with his *rifle*, the bullet having been cut into small pieces. It depended on where the bird was hit as to whether there was very much left for the pot !

It was some time before they could get on to any wild *yāk*. As this animal frequents higher ranges than any other wild beast, they had some pretty stiff walking. At first only a few herds of cows and young ones were encountered. It was not until after many days that they came across a solitary bull.

Like the bear, the sight and hearing of the *yāk* is not very good, but its sense of smell is highly developed. After a very laborious attempt by Rose and his orderly to stalk this bull, it got their wind, and they never saw it again.

A few days later they hit off a herd of six bulls, on a huge windy plateau. The stalk was very difficult, as the wind was constantly changing, and the only way to obtain cover was to crawl, or bend nearly double.

When Rose got within 150 yards he decided to chance a shot at the biggest bull, which dropped. He then fired at another, but the bullet got the animal too far back. It dropped on its knees, but was up again immediately

and preparing for a bolt, when Rose gave it his second barrel.

This seemed to daze the beast, for it ran first one way and then the other, stopping every now and then to grunt furiously, with lowered head.

Meanwhile Rose had approached within fifty yards. When the bull spotted the two figures it charged at once. A right and left brought it on to its knees again with a dull kind of roar, and Rose thought it was all over.

In this he was mistaken, for shaking its head in the most menacing manner, the bull staggered up like a boxer after a "knock-out." Not having too many cartridges, Rose was all against expending more than were absolutely necessary, but the bull, having partially recovered and seeing red, charged again.

Two more bullets, and it was down on its side about five paces short of Rose. Standing over it, at the "ready," he felt certain the bull was done in, when to his surprise this magnificent animal, with astounding rapidity, got first on its knees, then erect, and came at Rose for the third time.

My friend has often described to me that last charge. He was so close to the beast that he could smell it, and it seemed to be almost on top of him. The *yāk* being over seventeen hands high, looked simply enormous. Rose did not like it at all, for he was beginning to lose confidence in his rifle, with so much vitality shown after so large an expenditure of lead.

As a matter of fact, he had only soft-nosed bullets with him, which are not good enough for a *yāk*. Meanwhile there was this monster a few feet from him, with its great red back and bloodshot eye. As he stepped aside to evade the somewhat tottering rush, he gave it one in the head and one in the side, which was enough.

The horns of this one measured 32 inches, with a girth of 16; the other, 33 inches, and a girth of 13. They

proved a most embarrassing addition to Rose's baggage.

It was now very necessary to get back to Milam as quickly as possible. A start was to have been made next morning, but snow came on, and continued for two days. When they arrived eventually at the foot of the Uttara Dhura pass, it was found blocked with snow, and quite impassable. Rose next tried the Dharma pass, which was in a similar condition.

The only alternative to a winter's sojourn in Thibet, and a trial by court martial for absence without leave, was to go as hard as he could, six marches, for a pass to the east (Beans, about 15,000 feet high, and pronounced Bee-Aunts), as the only one likely to be still open.

*En route* to this pass Rose acquired a pony and a reliable Thibetan shikari, a man of many parts. Close to the foot of the pass they had to go through a Thibetan village. The inhabitants gazed very curiously at the strange figure on horseback. They seemed satisfied, however, with the shikari's explanation that it was a very holy man, unfortunately deaf, dumb, and blind, who was returning from a pilgrimage to the Mansorawur Lake.

The Beans pass fortunately was found to be open, and a very fit, though somewhat emaciated, Rose turned up at Almora the very day his leave expired, to find he had already been reported in *The Pioneer* as "missing." About thirty miles short of our station he sent on an express runner for a solah topee, a file of newspapers, tea, baccy, and some toothpicks!

#### RHINOCEROSSES :—

There are three species of rhinoceros in India, namely :—  
(a) The great one-horned rhinoceros (Nepal, Eastern Bengal, Assam, etc.) ; (b) The smaller one-horned rhinoceros (the Sunderbuns, Eastern Bengal, Assam, etc.) ; (c) the two-horned rhinoceros (said to be in Assam and from there



*Photo, Herzog and Higgins, Mhow, C.I.*

**NEPALESE SHIKARIS SKINNING A DEAD RHINOCEROS AND SEPARATING THE HEAD WITH AN AXE.**

*To face page 148.*



to Siam ; common in the Malay Peninsula, Borneo and Sumatra).

The African rhinoceros is bigger even than (a) and has two horns, the front one being of great length. I saw the record horn with a major of the Indian Medical Service in Dalhousie in 1920. It was over five feet. He used it as holder for a lamp. In the two-horned rhinoceros (c), the front horn seldom exceeds two and a half feet. This is the smallest of all rhinoceroses, the average height not being much over twelve hands. It is a curious fact that whereas (a) and (b) have incisors, the African specimen has no front teeth.

The great one-horned Indian rhinoceros is a big fellow averaging over seventeen hands high, with a girth of about ten feet. The late Maharajah of Cooch Behar shot one nineteen and a half hands high. The average horn measurement common to both sexes is about fourteen inches, but I believe one was shot in Assam with a horn measuring over twenty-four inches. Lord Curzon shot a very fine one with a horn over twenty-one and a half inches, which for a long time I thought was the record, as he did himself. He told me all about it.

He was shooting in the Nepal Terai with a very small party, and bagged the limit of tiger with some days to spare. Writing to the Nepal Government, he said he would like to shoot a rhinoceros. They sent an envoy at once, and the latter explained that, if the Viceroy could manage to take only a very small camp, and did not mind a long and rough journey, it might be arranged. I rather think only Baker-Carr (A.D.C.) and the military secretary accompanied Lord Curzon. The piece of jungle to be beaten was in the dry bed of a river, and only about two hundred yards broad by six hundred yards long. Hardly had the line started, when Lord Curzon heard a noise like a railway train, and a huge rhino charged towards him, which he dropped dead with a bullet

in the neck, from a .577 rifle belonging to Baker-Carr.

Then all got down from the elephants, and the Nepalese brought every conceivable vessel in which to catch the precious blood pouring from the animal's neck wound. In the middle of this there were loud cries of *Genra ! Genra !* (Rhino ! Rhino !). The Nepalese scattered, mahouts flew up their elephant's trunks, and the Viceroy and party were pushed into their howdahs without any ceremony. It was the mate of the other one coming for them, and Lord Curzon just managed to down it in time. Beating out this piece of jungle, a good tiger bolted near the end of it and was bagged by Baker-Carr.

These Nepal shoots are the cream of Indian shikar, but the Nepal Government, except to most exalted personages, gives very few permits for rhino. In 1911 King George and party bagged eighteen rhinoceroses, and last December the Prince of Wales saw nine killed during his visit to Nepal.

I reproduce a picture of our popular Prince and his first tiger. On his right is my friend Sir Baber, whom I have referred to on page 9 as having placed me so much in his debt by the wonderful photographs he has sent me. In the Prince of Wales' recent shoot the total bag was 17 tiger, 9 rhino, 2 bear and 2 panther.

I can remember the bitter disappointment of King George when he visited India as Prince of Wales in the year 1905, and his Nepal shoot had to be cancelled owing to a very severe outbreak of cholera. A disappointment to His Highness the Prime Minister too, whose preparations for such an event are of the most minute and arduous nature. He is quite untiring in his personal supervision of all arrangements.

These arrangements require much forethought. For instance, for the Prince of Wales' shoot last December a very large and luxuriously furnished camp, lit by electric light, was pitched in the forest. Anyone who knows



*To face page 150.*

*Photo, Central News Agency.*

**THE PRINCE OF WALES'S FIRST TIGER, DECEMBER, 1921, IN NEPAL. SHOT A FEW HOURS AFTER H.R.H.'S ARRIVAL IN NEPALESE TERRITORY.**





anything about camps can well imagine the work entailed in clearing a site in absolute jungle for such a tented town.

The monsoon, and the necessary information to be obtained about game, would delay the commencement of operations until November. A little over a month is not much time in which to level the site, plant grass, instal electric light, provide a water supply, make dozens of approach roads, and transport the enormous quantity of tents and furniture required. A very large matter, when you consider the accommodation required for H.R.H. and staff, British Envoy and staff, numerous guests, and press representatives, etc.

*The Pioneer* tells us, when commenting on the excellent arrangements made, that roads had to be opened up in every direction as far distant as thirty miles from camp. Telephones were installed north, south, east and west, so that instant *khabar* could be received regarding game. More than five hundred elephants were collected at various points ready to concentrate, as required, within thirty-five miles of the main camp, for the "ringing" of a tiger, or the pursuit of a rhinoceros.

No tiger could kill, nor a rhino take his mid-day siesta (a rhinoceros sleeps all day, and only feeds morning and evening, mainly on grass) without *khabar* being received at once regarding the exact locality. With such a wonderful system of intelligence it is not surprising that there was no blank day, or that the Prince of Wales shot his first tiger a few hours after his arrival, and his first rhino two days later.

All this could not be done without a very excellent *bandobast*. That is to say, very active supervision, guidance and control by the Prime Minister, and untiring assistance by the members of His Highness' family.

## CHAPTER XII

### DEER AND ANTELOPE

**I** PROPOSE to talk only about deer and antelope that I have shot. This is not a biological treatise on zoology, but rather a guide, to interest, and perhaps help, young sportsmen in India whose number I am so anxious to see increase. To commence with, let me suggest they should not lay too much stress on trying to secure *record heads*. Of course we all like to get a big one, but it is a great pity to sacrifice the enormous pleasure and advantage of the outing and the stalk, to disappointment and dissatisfaction if you have not beaten the other feller!

The novice must first ascertain what are the restrictions regarding "heads," in the district he has selected. Not only as regards number, but as regards size of antlers, or horns. All this, however, will be given in his shooting pass, which he should read carefully. I am sorry to say some sportsmen do not trouble to do so.

Even the beginner will probably know that *deer* are distinguished from other cud-chewing animals by their antlers, which they cast annually. Also, that all male deer carry them except the musk deer and mouse deer. The hind of the reindeer is the only female deer to carry antlers.

On the other hand, antelope, sheep and goats have permanent horns, which are hollow. With the exception of the Indian black buck, nilgai, and four-horned antelope,

horns are carried by both male and female, the latter being much smaller. I believe the one European species of the antelope now extant is the chamois. The Indian *chinkārā* (ravine antelope) is the only antelope known as the "gazelle" on the plains of India.

As regards deer, I shall commence with the *khakur*, the prettiest, most numerous and smallest of all. I am excepting the mouse deer, because I have never seen one. I have heard of it though, as a little yellowy-brown, rock-loving animal under a foot high, and very easily tamed.

#### THE KHAKUR OR BARKING DEER (*Muntjac*):—

This little red fellow, often called by the natives *Jangli Bukra* (forest goat), is found everywhere in the hills. I have seen it frequently too on the plains, in forests close to the foot-hills. It barks something like a dog when alarmed, or when calling for its mate. Quite a noisy bark too, with very frequent repetition. This is often an indication of a panther about. When speaking of panther, I gave an instance.

The *khakur* is a pretty, dainty animal, and its flesh very good eating. It is a most interesting animal to watch, especially when licking its face. This it does with a tongue of extraordinary length. The horns are shed at the beginning of the hot weather, and have sprouted again long before the end of the rains. They are very peculiar indeed, the burr starting from two to four inches above the forehead, on a foundation of elongated bone covered with skin. The horn part is seldom more than four inches long, but over six inches is recorded. The tips turn over towards each other.

The average height of the *khakur* is under two feet, and it is a little wonder at getting through the thickest undergrowth. It pushes through this with its head down, and croup up. The canine teeth (or tusches) of the male are very sharp and it can use them ferociously when wounded. A *khakur*, with a vicious snap, once cut me badly in the hand.

This happened to me also with a musk deer, but the latter did not snap. Its tush happened to catch my hand, as it turned its head, with a quick jerk, before it was quite dead.

#### THE SAMBAR :—

The sambar is the biggest of all Indian deer, running up to fourteen hands, with magnificent massive antlers. These have been known to measure over four feet in length\*, with a girth of nearly twelve inches, a spread of over three feet, and a tip to tip measurement of more than two feet. In the hills of Nepal and the United Provinces it is called *jarāo* and in the Tarai, *māha*†. The sambar is to be found in nearly all forests, from 10,000 feet downwards, but it is most common in hilly jungle. Unlike other cervidæ, it does not drop its horns regularly. We had one in the fort ditch at Almora which kept its horns for years.

Soon after I started stag shooting I missed one with very large and heavy antlers in the hills during the monsoon. The rain and mist made my sights difficult to see, but I always imagine it had the best head on record! Abnormal horns are common, but the rule is three times, of which the brow antler is sometimes unusually long. The sambar has enormously large ears with which it hears remarkably well. It is often a stupid kind of beast giving an easy shot; at other times, especially when lying up, it is very difficult to approach. The only parts of this deer I have ever been able to eat are the tongue and the marrow bones, both of which are excellent.

Its tenacity of life is most marked and even when very badly wounded it will go a long way. One day Herky Ross fired at a good stag with a single barrel .577 he had. The *sambar* flinched to the shot, but galloped away out of sight.

\* I saw one set of antlers in the dining-room of Mr. Nash, a tea-planter at Gwaldam in Garhwal, which measured over 48 inches with a massive girth of more than 10 inches.

† This from the sound of its "bell," and pronounced sharply, as one syllable.

A few yards from the spot where it stood was some blood, and fifty yards further was its *heart lying on the ground*, yet we did not find it dead until going a hundred paces more. Herky was greatly surprised and much interested. He had all the distances carefully paced out.

There is usually only one stag in a herd of about ten hinds, but I have found two or more good stag together after the rut. During the rutting season the stags are very bellicose, and have terrific encounters, which often end fatally for one or the other. They do not roar, but call with a sharp bell kind of noise, fairly easy to imitate. There is no deer or antelope, except perhaps the black buck, of which a greater number of immature heads have been shot by bad sportsmen. This is a crying shame, for no one should put up at a head he estimates to be under thirty-four inches.

I heard of a big head one winter above a place called Khairna, between Ranikhet and Naini Tal, so I went and slept in a village, the inhabitants of which had all gone down to the plains. As day was breaking next morning I found two stag browsing on some shoots in the adjoining forest, but they were too quick for me, and galloped off. One looked magnificent, and following, sick at heart, we tried to track them, for the ground was damp, and their marks enormous. By noon I was pretty fed up, and had no hope of ever seeing that big one again, for we had got on to grassy slopes which, now under the rays of the sun, failed to give even an impression.

The grass shoes I was wearing for silent stalking, and without any heels, had given me several falls on the dry grass. Not an ordinary tumble, but that sudden precipitate smack on to your posterior, which you often get on the ice. I wanted a rest badly, and seeing a nice wooded coppice below, thought it would be a good place for shade and water. Down the steep slope we went, and when within about a hundred yards of the coppice, up went my heels

again, off went my hat and bang went my head against the hard hillside. "Damn!" was all I could say, in a loud voice, as I sat up.

Then came a rustle, with a sound of breaking twigs, and out of the coppice trotted my monster friend across our front, followed by the smaller one. A broadside shot at eighty yards! Poor old monarch of the glen, its day had come, and soon I was measuring its splendid antlers. Not so long, only  $37\frac{1}{2}$  inches, but with a girth of nine. Some idea of its weight (probably quite 700 pounds), can be gauged, when I say that it took eight coolies, with poles, to carry the head, cut off low at the neck, into Almora, a distance of nineteen miles.

Talking of "its day had come," reminds me of the first Gurkha orderly I ever had, my old friend Sarabjit of the 3rd, whom I shall never forget, and of whom I was very fond. When much dejected at some bad miss I had made, and when pouring out my woes to him at the chance of a good head lost for ever, he would always try and comfort me by saying:—" *Fikr nahin, sāhib, uske marne-kā-wagt nahin aya* " (Never mind, sahib, its time to die has not yet come). Dear old Sarabjit, he himself died in Chitral, just after the 1895 campaign.

In spite of digression I must mention how polite is the decent Oriental, and how anxious not to hurt your feelings. What can be more delicious than this :—

My father-in-law began golf at Agra by taking out his clubs and practising near the polo ground attended by two, if not three, red coated chuprassis. The jemadar (head-man) was taught how to "tee" the ball, another man would go ahead to find it (if it were hit), a third would carry the sahib's coat and small hat. The ball having been "teed," the jemadar would stand respectfully to one side and the sahib, after carefully "addressing" the ball, would take a mighty slog. If successful this attendant would joyfully exclaim "laggaya" (it is hit); if it were missed, he would

with much solemnity, remark *bachgāya* (it hath escaped)! This would go on for hours.

THE KASHMIR STAG (often called *Bārahsinghā* (twelve points) by the natives) :—

This fine stag about twelve hands high or over, is to be found in the Kashmir Valley and in parts of Chamba. It is not so big or anything like so heavy as the sambar. Its horns have brow, bez, trez and royal tines averaging in length a few inches over three feet. The record is four feet, shot by that fine old sportsman, Lieutenant-Colonel A. E. Ward, superintendent of the Maharajah's state preserves in Kashmir. The finest specimen I ever saw was shot by Lieutenant-Colonel Stewart Patterson, my wife's brother, and is a truly magnificent trophy with horns forty-six inches in length, enormous spread, and of perfect symmetry. The space it occupies on the wall is prodigious. Indeed, the first glimpse of this wonderful "royal," and Patterson's glorious *nyān* simply takes your breath away, especially when flanked by a grand *uriyāl* of over thirty-six inches, and an ibex, forty-six and a half.

A ten pointer head is often bigger, and a finer trophy, than a "royal." I once had unusually bad luck with a very fine head of ten points, which of course I think the largest antlers ever dropped by a stag. I was shooting near Srinagar in Kashmir very late in March, in a private preserve of the Maharajah's. It was on the cards that all stag had shed their horns, but when riding into camp I saw a group of four or five not a thousand yards away. My battery consisted of a D.B. .303 and a single .450-400 of great power, and for which I had just got up a hundred cartridges from Bombay, contained in tinned-up packets of ten, and each one labelled .450-400, etc.

Picking up my glasses and the big rifle, cutting off the top of a packet of ten cartridges and shoving them into my pocket, I hurried off with a stalker, and getting the wind



right was soon close to the stag, of which there were seven. Three were lying down, and had cast their horns. Of the four standing, or browsing, two were fair "royals," one had no antlers, and the last was a truly magnificent "ten pointer," with horns of great length and symmetry and a wonderful spread. Time to load, I thought before creeping forward for the shot, but the cartridge would not go into the chamber, for it was of .450 calibre all through !

There was nothing for it, but to send the stalker dashing off for my other rifle. He went and returned very quickly, but the stag quite quiet at first, gradually got uneasy, and just before he came back stalked very majestically up the hill, and over the top.

Now the strange thing is that the cartridges in the nine other packets were quite correct, with a .400 bullet. It was just this one packet, labelled like the others, but filled up with the wrong cartridge. Evidently, "the stag's time to die had not yet come !"

The next day I got a decent "royal," but not to be compared with the one let off by that packer of Messrs. Kynoch and Co.

#### THE SWAMP DEER OR BARAHSINGHA (*Gond*) :—

A little smaller than the Kashmir stag at the shoulder, but sometimes heavier. This animal is rather similar to our red deer to look at. The antlers average about two and a half feet in length, but some *gond* with antlers of over three feet in length have been shot. Variation is common and, besides seeing swamp deer with fourteen points, I have heard of twenty-four. The brow tine comes out almost at right angles to the beam, and often contains small points. A peculiarity about the beam is that it has no tines for more than half way up its length.

Swamp deer are usually found in grass near forests, but I have come across them right inside the forest, and generally in large herds of over thirty. The stag gives itself away a

good deal in the rutting season by its roar, which is loud, harsh, and something of a bray. A stag with less than twelve tines should never be shot, if it does not carry antlers of abnormal size. The flesh is good to eat.

The first time I saw a *gond* was with Herky Ross in the Kumaon Tarai. We were beating out some heavy grass, in which we knew were two stag. I was put in the centre of the line, as it was intended I should get one. Herky was on the right, and the Dehra Dun Rajah on the left. The latter was mounted on an extraordinarily fast elephant of his own, which could do everything but talk. The grass was a very long beat, and there was soon *movement* in front of me. On we pressed, and then I suddenly became aware of the rajah at my side. He had run his elephant up behind the line from the left, and pushed in between me and the next pad. I was pretty sick, but being a fellow guest could say nothing. But I was sicker still when, the two stag bolting near the end of the grass, the rajah threw up his rifle like lightning, and downed both of them, right and left, before I got in a shot at all !

#### THE CHITAL, OR SPOTTED DEER :—

A most beautiful deer a little over eight hands high, with very elegant symmetrical six-tined antlers, running up to nearly forty inches in length. Not that you get such big ones now, except perhaps in private preserves like the Mackinnons used to have in the Doon ; in very recent years I have not heard of many over thirty-five inches. Indeed, thirty-four inches is looked upon as quite a decent head.

The late Lord Minto's daughter (Lady Eileen Elliott that was, now Lady Cromer), holds the record for a fine head of 39½ inches, shot in the Sawaliks.\* Chital are to be found in the forest, in scrub jungle, and even sometimes

\* Sir John Goodwin has shot two beautiful heads, now in his dining-room. One is 39 and the other (even more perfectly symmetrical) is 38 inches. Our son Nigel gave the best head he shot (just over 38) to his mess (2nd Gurkhas) at Dehra Dun.

in heavy crops. You can get them on the lower spurs of the Himalayas, and all over India, except in Sind, the Punjab and Assam. They have a great look of the ordinary fallow deer, barring the antlers. They generally congregate in large herds; but, except when "rutting," the stags live together, apart from the hinds.

Chital afford the most enticing and delightful stalking. A very early rise, a start in the dark, and then the dewy glades of the forest, which you traverse so silently with your grass-shod feet. Suddenly a series of bellows, quickly repeated—for it is the rutting season—and so shrilly made that you wonder if it is not a whistle. You know, or your shikari tells you, what it is, and with rifle at the "ready" you creep slowly forward.

First you see a few hinds, then some stags, and you wonder if that one on the right is a good head. The shikari whispers "Maro!" "Maro!"\*, but you hesitate, doubtful of the size, and kneel under cover behind a tree.

A few moments more, and how glad you are you waited. Threading its way through the jungle with the most majestic air, and glancing in a supercilious manner at its hinds, first to this side and then to that, comes the *master* stag. No doubt whatever about those antlers, as the beautiful head is bent with the most graceful movement, to avoid an overhanging bough.

Trembling with excitement you draw your bead and fire. A bound, a fall, and all is over. Rushing up, you get out your steel tape, and much is your elation at finding your trophy measures  $36\frac{1}{2}$  inches.

Then you rise and, looking down, the reaction sets in. An hour before you were glorying in your health and strength, were imbibing great draughts of the fresh morning air, thinking how good it was to be alive, and hoping so much you would get a stag.

There it is, you have got your wish. But do you feel

\* Shoot! Shoot!—*hit*. kill.

entirely happy? Who could be anything but sad at seeing such a beautiful creature lying at his feet?

In the sixties and seventies chital used to be found in enormous herds. Patterson and Markham (both of whom I mention often) used to shoot a great deal together, and the former, a very humane sportsman, told me he got positively ashamed of shooting so many stags.

So much so, that one day in the jungle, after both sportsmen had shot a couple, Patterson discussed the matter with Markham, and persuaded the latter to agree to a pact that neither of them would shoot any more, unless meat was badly required in the camp.

The same evening they journeyed home together side by side, leaning back in their howdahs as they traversed a forest drive. A very fine chital stag crossing the drive in front of them at easy range, up jumped Markham and bowled it over!

#### THE HOG DEER (*Parha*).

A small deer about two feet high, with horns a foot or so long, and peculiar in that the brow antler meets the beam at an acute angle. The upper tine is longer than the lower. They frequent grass jungle, and especially swamps. One often puts them up out snipe shooting, and sometimes they lie very close.

Anything over a fifteen inch horn is good. I once had the luck to shoot two, right and left, of seventeen and fifteen and a half inches, respectively.

#### THE MUSK DEER (*Kasturi*):—

To be got all over the Himalayas at high altitude, but often strictly preserved on account of its musk pod. This is a gland attached to the stomach, and, as it contains about an ounce of musk, is valuable. Strange to say this gland does not affect the meat at all; which is delicious. The coat is very peculiar, consisting of long, coarse, thick,

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brittle hair very close together. The ears are enormous, and its gait is uncommon, as the hind legs are much longer than the fore. The canine teeth are much bigger than those of the *Khakur*. I shot one *Kasturi* with tushes three inches long. This was the one which gashed me, as I mentioned before.

#### ANTELOPE—THE BLACK BUCK :—

The most common antelope in India is the black buck which can be hunted almost everywhere throughout the plains. They are stalked, speared and hunted with dogs, as also with the hunting leopard (cheetah). I was most angry with some sportsmen (?) once, who actually tried to wound one, and then run it down with "long dogs." In my opinion you have very little chance of killing an unwounded wild buck with any kind of dog. The only time I actually knew personally of black buck being *speared*, was in the "rains," when their small slender feet sank far in to the heavy clay soil.

In many parts of India the cheetah, or hunting leopard, is used for the pursuit of this antelope. By the same token this last winter (November, 1921), cheetah hunting of black buck was the Prince of Wales' first introduction to sport in India. I do not suppose he was very much impressed by it.

It is commonly supposed that the cheetah is *trained* to pull down buck by the natives. As a matter of fact it is only *tamed* by them. A baby cheetah would be useless, as it had never learnt to kill in its natural state, and you could not well teach it how to seize its prey, and also handle it at the same time !

What a rajah's shikaris do, is to capture an adult animal. For this task they deserve much credit, as it is not exactly child's play. It is sometimes done by putting bait in an enclosure furnished with a trap door. More often however strong nooses are set round a tree where cheetah are known

to whet their claws. When the animal is caught, he is most pluckily secured, roped, hooded and eventually—by means of plenty of starvation—tamed.

The excellent photograph I reproduce depicts admirably its high and broad skull, short muzzle and long and slender limbs. Standing behind are falconers with their hooded hawks, and on either side a spotted lynx, proverbial for its keen sight, remarkable for its hearing, and deadly in its attack as it drops on its victim from the branches of a tree. The lynx is as savage and destructive as they make them, but easily tamed when young.

The cheetah's great asset is its first lightning rush, which it has learnt of course in its wild state. It consists of incredibly fast bounds. The longer the animal is in captivity the more these rushes deteriorate in pace. [This may account partly for the poor sport shown His Royal Highness.] If the cheetah does not catch the buck in its first onset, it seldom perseveres, but sits down, and waits for its keeper to secure it. These animals become extraordinarily tame.

The ordinary method of cheetah hunting is to take the animal out in a country bullock cart, leashed and hooded. Black buck being used to such carts, will allow them to get quite close without suspecting any danger. When judged to be near enough to the game, the antelope is shown to the cheetah, and the latter slipped. Even with a first-class animal of recent capture there are a good many failures.

The biggest black buck horns I have ever seen were nearly twenty-eight inches, shot by Sir Bindon Blood in the year 1877, and now in the Sappers and Miners Mess at Roorkee. There is a pretty generally accepted record of a head measuring 30½ inches, shot over forty years ago on the Mohan Pass in the Sawaliks. The poor old beggar must have gone there to die. Heads over twenty-four inches are very good in these days. Black buck are beautiful creatures, and

latterly I have felt much remorse, after shooting one, on seeing its graceful form stretched out on the ground. By far the most sporting method is to stalk them.

I was doing so two or three years ago, and, on getting close decided I would not shoot the buck. Rising from my prone position, I sat up to watch it, keeping perfectly still. The movement of sitting up attracted its attention, but the motionless attitude puzzled the animal so much that it actually advanced nearer and nearer, coming to within about fifty paces, stamping its forefeet, and snorting, at every halt. Then I moved a hand slightly, and it bucked away in the prettiest manner.

**CHINKARA** (ravine antelope, commonly called "ravine deer") :—

You get these almost everywhere, and they provide good practice in stalking. The horns of the buck are nearly straight and very neat looking. The female also has smaller ones. Anything over twelve inches is good, but over fifteen inches has been shot. When frightened, this little gazelle hisses through its nose with a kind of sneeze. Hence its name from *chink*—a sneeze. The flesh of both the *chink* and black buck is very good eating.

**THE FOUR HORNED ANTELOPE :—**

A little fellow only very slightly bigger than the *khakur* with a funny little mincing gait, all jerks. One is supposed to find it below the Himalayas anywhere, but although I have hunted the low hills of Kumaon and Garhwal a great deal, I never came across one in those regions. In the Sawaliks I found one at first attempt. The four horns are in pairs, one pair behind the other. The front ones are seldom two inches long, or the back ones more than four inches.

Look out for it in sparse jungle, and always near water. Remember it is very shy.



*To face page 164.*

*Photo, Johnson and Hoffman, India.*

**A CHEETAH, TWO LYNX, AND THREE HOODED HAWKS.**





**THE NILGAI, OR BLUE BULL :—**

An antelope some thirteen and a half hands high, but of equine form. I have often seen old bulls a good hand higher. No one shoots this animal for sport, but one sometimes has to do so for meat. Moreover nilgai commit much damage to crops, and should therefore be killed when met with. The bull has a mane and throat tuft, with horns running up to ten inches. The flesh is much prized by Mohammedans.

One peculiarity about this species is, that, although the cow is hornless, a barren cow has been known to take on the male characteristics of horns, mane, long black throat tuft, and iron grey coat. Another special point is, that, if not hit in a vital spot, it may take an enormous amount of lead to kill the beast.

Nilgai are to be found all over the plains of India from north to south. They go about in herds, although I have generally come across the bulls by themselves. When alarmed they adopt a heavy clumsy kind of gallop, which is much faster than it looks. I have frequently seen tame ones used as oxen. A nilgai used to draw a cart round cantonments in Ambala.

## CHAPTER XIII

### WILD SHEEP, IBEX AND MAR-KHOR

#### WILD SHEEP. THE NYAN :—

**A**S I have never shot, or hunted, the great Thibetan sheep (Nyan), sometimes called *ammon*, or the great Pamir sheep (*Ovis poli*), or the Himalayan ibex, I ought not, after what I said at the beginning of Chapter XII, to allude to them at all. I cannot, however, help mentioning, *en passant*, that could I but have my time over again, my earliest ambition would be to bag one of each.

The Nyan (to be found at very high elevations in Thibet, Ladak and Sikkim) is the biggest of all sheep, and abnormally cunning. It stands at least twelve hands at the shoulder, with a very massive horn sometimes a foot and a half round the base, and measuring up to four feet round the curve of what is almost a complete circle. The mess of the 45th Sikhs has a specimen, of which one horn is 48 inches and the other  $47\frac{1}{2}$ , while my wife's brother (Lieut.-Colonel Stewart Patterson) shot, in Ladak, a magnificent and very symmetrical trophy, only a quarter of an inch less.

The Poli you can only get, I believe, within Indian limits, north of Gilgit. It is very much like the Nyan, but a bit smaller. Its horns, though less in girth, are a good deal longer, the spiral of each being much more than

a circle, and measuring five, or even up to nearly six feet, round the curve.

URIYAL (*Shapoo*) :—

This small wild sheep, barely eight hands high, carries a very nice trophy in the shape of a ram's horn, averaging nearly two and a half feet round a curve, which is almost a circle. It is to be found in the Punjab salt range, Ladak, Thibet, Astor, Baluchistan, Sind, etc. I can strongly recommend a trip in the salt range, and licences can be obtained from the Deputy Commissioner at Campbellpur. A dozen rams together look very dignified and impressive, especially through glasses.

I shot two one morning (31½ and 32 inches) when I had only one more to shoot by my licence. This is an example of the danger of the small bore rifle, which I was using that day. Getting up long before dawn, and starting with a long ride on a native saddle, I followed a herd of eleven rams till 3 p.m. without getting a shot. At that hour I felt sure they were in a wooded ravine below me. As we were twelve miles from home, I rolled down a big rock, and sat ready. Out came the rams and trotted up the opposite side, in single file. Choosing the last, as the biggest, I fired and heard the bullet hit a stone. "Nahin lag gaya" (missed), said the shikari; and the ram turned round and bolted down the ravine. Hastily aiming at the third, as the next biggest, it dropped in its tracks.

When we went to pick it up, we passed the spot where the first bullet had gone, and just beyond I saw a small blood trail. We followed it, and finding the ram lying down, I killed it with another shot, as it jumped up. The first bullet had gone clean through it. I had of course to make my peace with the Deputy Commissioner, who was very good, writing that accidents would happen, as for instance a man being presented sometimes with twins !

Hunting this delightful sheep is one of the first ventures I advise young sportsmen to undertake. It is so easy to carry out too, for the train takes you almost on to your ground. The walking is not difficult, the stalking full of interest, and the trophy a handsome one.

**BARHEL (BLUE SHEEP) :—**

Of all big game in the hills the barhel is the animal which has attracted me most, probably because it was the first of the wild sheep, or goat *genus*, I ever saw. Unfortunately you have to go a long way to find it, for it inhabits steep grassy slopes far above the tree level, and in the summer seldom comes lower than some 14,000 feet. In a never-to-be-forgotten trip to Spiti in 1884, as recorded later on, I met some coolies near the Bhabar Pass (Pustirang, 15,700 feet), one of whom was carrying a glorious barhel head.

All I knew about this sheep was what I had read in much haste, just before departure, in a borrowed copy of some game book. The horns in the coolie's load seemed enormous. Presently I met the owner, a subaltern in the K.O.B.s, who told me the measurement was over 30 inches, and that he believed it was a record. Burke tells us there is a specimen in the Indian Museum which measures 32. Personally I have never seen one alive, that I estimated to be bigger than 24 inches, and have not shot one over 23.

Barhel ground is not dangerous like *thar* fastnesses, but it is very steep, and the high altitude makes walking difficult. When I was about forty years of age, we camped one November near a village, some 14,000 feet above sea level, while I hunted barhel for a fortnight. I had to go up about 2,000 feet every morning, at daybreak, to get on to the ground. Finding on the higher slopes it was necessary to pause every fifty yards or so to take breath, I thought *anno domini* had overtaken me, and

was very depressed. Knowing my shikari had been on the same ground the year before, with a friend of mine whom I looked on as a very hard nut, I suggested that *that* Sahib had no occasion to stop at all? To my delight, the shikari said that, on the contrary, he had to halt every *twenty* yards! Of course it may have just been his politeness!

We were camped at the back of a mountain called Nanda Devi, 25,700 feet high. I decided, when moving, to go straight down to a stream some 7,000 feet above sea level. From this little mountain torrent, one looked straight up to the summit of Nanda Devi, with its glaciers, its snow-clad slopes and its ever falling avalanches (these had alarmed us considerably our first night in camp). Nearly 19,000 feet at a glance, and appearing to be only a matter of a mile or two away. How glorious a sight I cannot describe. We simply looked at it again and again, and walking on kept turning back to look. The spectacle moved one, being so noble, magnificent and grand.

To reach our new camp, we had a longish march, the latter part through jungle. Just before dusk we arrived at a torrent, very deep and rushing over rocks and boulders at a furious pace. Our tents, we found, were pitched *across* the stream, some two miles on. There was only a huge fir tree, about sixty feet long, thrown over the foaming water as a bridge. This broke my wife's heart, and she said she could go no further.

After a short rest I crossed by the fir tree, and I found it a very difficult performance. Many stumps of the branches had been left in it, after a perfunctory kind of lopping. Re-crossing, I explained we *must* get over, or become benighted. Summoning up all her courage, my wife followed me with her hands on the shoulders of the shikari in front of her. This was quite a nerve testing and formidable achievement. The tree was very round and rough, the water roared close below it, to fall meant

certain death, and yet we had to cross. On reaching the other side my wife burst into tears. Nor was I surprised.

#### WILD GOAT. THE IBEX :—

An ibex I certainly ought to have bagged, but somehow or other I have never had a shot at one, nor even got on to their ground of late years. The large scimitar-shaped horns, bearing outwards from each other and curving backwards, look very well on the wall, especially if you can secure a specimen measuring over 45 inches. Up to 55 inches, or even more, has been recorded.

#### THE MAR-KHOR :—

A magnificent goat often ten hands high at the shoulder. As regards its horns, Burke in his book \* very truly writes :—

“No species varies so much in horn formation as the Mar-khor. There are four well recognisable varieties :— (1) the Astor, in which the massive horns form a very open spiral, never exceeding one and a half turns ; (2) the Pir Panjal, in which the spiral is less open, the horns having from one to two turns ; (3) the Cabul, in which the horns are nearly straight, having a slight spiral ; (4) the Suleiman, in which the horns are absolutely straight and conical, with two keels wound spirally round after the manner of a barley sugar stick, good horns having two or three complete turns.”

To these may be added heads obtainable in the mountain ranges near Quetta in Baluchistan. These are most curious. Some of them are straight (Suleiman type), others almost as open as the formation known as the Astor. Stranger still, Colonel Drake (late R.M.L.I.) has in his possession a head shot near Quetta, in which *one* horn is straight, the other a very open spiral !

I reproduce an absolutely unique photograph, very

\* *The Indian Field Shikar Book.*

kindly given me by Sir John Goodwin, of two males he found dead, with their horns interlocked, on Zerghum, a mountain near Quetta 11,738 feet high. When found these mar-khor were lying against the side of a small cliff almost exactly in the position shown in the photo, but they had to be shifted a little to get a suitable light.

The impression Sir John gathered was that the beast on the right of the picture had lived longer than the other, being better preserved and lying down against the rock in a natural position. As my publisher truly said on seeing the photograph :

“One can hardly imagine a more terrible fate than this. Think of being inextricably fixed to your enemy cheek to jowl, and how heartily sick you would get of his face before you died ! ”

On the same mountain that Goodwin found the two dead mar-khor with horns interlocked, he witnessed a very unusual sight.

He was watching a big buck mar-khor on the opposite side of a deep valley. There was little vegetation, such as it was being covered with snow, but here and there was a cypress tree jutting out from the hillside.

The mar-khor got on the move, and making its way through the snow to one of these trees, very slowly and deliberately climbed up it !

The tree was not sloping. It was quite upright, with many branches growing horizontally from the trunk. As Sir John says :—

“It was most interesting watching it climb up. When some twelve or fifteen feet from the ground, the mar-khor worked its way along one of the horizontal branches until the animal was several feet from the main trunk.

“For nearly an hour I watched it, in spite of the most bitter cold, as it fed on the twigs. Had I not seen it with my own eyes, I could never have believed it possible for any hoofed animal to have done it.”



It is pleasant to record further, that Sir John did not compass that particular mar-khor's destruction. It may have been that he had shot one just as big the year before ! But I like to think it was because of the clever beast's remarkable performance.

Sir John is a keen naturalist. At a meeting of the Quetta branch of the Bombay Natural History Society, he once brought up a most interesting point regarding the horn formation of goats in India. Others may have noticed it, although it does not fall to the lot of many people to have such marked powers of observation.

In every herd of *tame* goats the males carry horns of the ibex and mar-khor types. Those of the ibex type closely correspond in miniature to the horns of the wild goat. As regards the mar-khor variety, however, whereas the twist in the wild animal is outwards, that of the tame goat is *invariably* in the reverse direction. Can any naturalist explain ?

As regards measurements, mar-khor horns vary according to the type. In the Astor and Pir Panjal varieties anything over 47 inches, round the curve, is a good head. Sportsmen have bagged them over 60 inches. I have seen a mar-khor on the hillside with horns nearly that length. As I watched it through glasses, sitting with much dignity under the shelter of a rock, or scratching beyond its scut with the tip of a horn, it was enough to make anyone's mouth water !

A measurement of 36 inches, straight from base to tip, is a very good head of the Cabul or Suleiman variety. I only once saw one I judged to be that length, and it was even a good bit more. This animal gave me an awful grueling. It was always surrounded by its wives at the period I made its acquaintance. Even if it went for a drink, one or two of them remained above doing sentinel. Although for three days I made lengthy detours over dreadfully bad ground, I could never get closer than a



*To face page 172.*

**TWO BUCK MAR-KHOR WITH HORNS IRRETRIEVABLY INTERLOCKED.  
THEY HAVE DIED OF STARVATION IN CONSEQUENCE.**



thousand yards. Then my leave being up, I had to return to Quetta. Soon afterwards, I was told, a wily Pathan shot it.

An instance of one good head becoming *two* heads on the walls of a certain officers' mess is worth recording.

A friend of mine named Brown, when hunting mar-khor, downed a very good one of over 56 inches. He was naturally delighted, and had much to say to the shikari (*en route* to pick up the trophy) regarding the excellency of the shot. As they approached the prostrate animal, it suddenly jumped up, and went off! Brown was so rattled, he promptly missed an easy shot, and then ineffectually emptied his magazine.

On the ground where the mar-khor had fallen was its left horn, 56½ inches in length. The bullet had cut it off neatly at the base, and of course temporarily stunned the owner. Brown felt sure it would soon die, and spent days searching for it. On leaving the nullah he offered a large reward for the head if found, and left a notice in the nearest village for any sportsman coming after him. This notice I saw myself the following year.

Brown had some spare "masks," so on return to his unit he got a clever regimental carpenter to make him a wooden skull, and a facsimile of the 56½ inch horn for the right side. Covering the skull with a mask of some other mar-khor shot previously, he presented the mess with a handsome trophy!

Two years later another officer of Brown's regiment went to the same nullah, and shot the one-horned mar-khor. He, in his turn, had a wooden left horn constructed and, utilising the beast's own mask, gave the head as a memento to his mess!

When the late Lord Kitchener visited Gilgit, we went out after a big mar-khor, which had been kept warm for him. He had every assistance, but it was a very severe climb. However, he shot it, and was immensely pleased.

On his visit to Almora, a year later, I asked him to tell me about the stalk. He would not tell me anything. He simply shook his head and said : " It nearly killed me ; it *very* nearly killed me ! "

Mar-khor are to be found in the Pir Panjal ranges south of Kashmir, in Astor, Baltistan, Gilgit, the Suleiman range, hills between Bannu and Dera Ismail Khan, ranges near Quetta, as well as in Hazara and Afghanistan. I can confidently recommend the Kajrag range south of Kashmir, as a very good hunting ground possessing some good heads. I was there myself once with a very rotten shikari, but managed to get one fairly decent one of 48 inches. For over twenty days I tried for a monster, who with another male, and half a dozen females, fed regularly in the evening near some open tree jungle about a mile from my tent.

The shikari always put me off trying by way of the trees, saying I should be seen first. For days and days we tried to get a shot across a deep impassable ravine, but I could never find the herd within range. Telling the shikari to go sick, I went without him on the side where the trees stood. There I regularly " sat up " for this big one, putting a coolie on a rock 2,000 yards away on the opposite hill. This man was to wave a paper according to instructions given. The first evening nothing happened, only a negative sign, and I slept under a rock. The next day I had hardly taken my place, about 3 p.m., when my glasses told me the coolie was signalling that the herd was feeding towards me.

Intense excitement, and presently the smaller male appeared. I did not want this one a bit, except as second shot (my limit was two), for it had a very decent head. Nearer and nearer it came, and drank eighty yards off, afterwards getting out of sight in a ravine. All this time I was straining my eyes to see the big one, but no sign of it.

Then the smaller one, emerging from the ravine, put up its head and neck ten yards away. It was broadside on, gazing into the far distance. I felt that if I did not shoot it the animal was bound to see me in a second, and then bound off and give the alarm. So I let this one have it in the neck, and it fell stone dead.

Loading like lightning, and then sitting very still, I had the rifle up to my shoulder for the other, but it never came in sight. The coolie opposite told me afterwards that, when I fired, it was about a hundred yards away amongst the trees. On hearing the shot, it went right up the snow-clad mountain, and over the top of it.

I never saw it again, but let in a friend in the 6th Gurkhas a few days later, who had been wandering about outside my block until it was free. I told him all I knew, and showed him the places. After he had been hunting for ten days, he wrote me he was "fed up," and after one more try was coming out, as he had seen nothing fit to shoot at. That last day he visited my "sit-up" place again and saw the big one. He shot it and found its horns less than two inches short of five feet. It is fourth record!

In case it may be of some assistance to others, I will relate why I went to the Kajnag range for mar-khor, and how I got there.

It was only after we had left for ever the snow-capped mountains of Kumaon and Garhwal, that, opportunity occurring, we decided on a four months' trip to Srinagar, Gulmarg, and the Kashmir valleys beyond. One inducement was that Patterson, my brother-in-law, was first assistant to the Resident, and therefore able to be, as he was, of enormous assistance.

There is more than one way into Kashmir, but the vast majority travel by train to Rawalpindi and then by motor to Srinagar. This is a good deal quicker and more direct. But never having then seen Abbotabad, the home of the 5th and 6th Gurkhas, we selected that route. Fast tongas

from Abbotabad take five days on the journey, but all the necessary information can be obtained from the Tehsildar at that station.

Having arrived at Srinagar towards the end of March, it was a question of what direction to take in order to obtain the required trophies. As the discussion on this, and subsequent decision and action, may be a help to beginners, I will say a few words about it.

To begin with, the sportsman will find in the Secretary of the Kashmir Game Preservation Dept. (Major H. R. Wigram), a man who will give him every help, and provide him with all the requisite information. He should note particularly that the dimensions laid down as a definition of *shootable* heads under the Kashmir game laws are very "tall" for certain animals, *e.g.*, mar-khor and barhel.

It was arranged my wife should remain at Srinagar and Gulmarg to keep house for her brother, while I went off into the wilds. As Patterson truly said, the direction to go depended entirely on my first objective. Did I want nyan, mar-khor, ibex, barhel, shapoo, or what? On my remarking that I wanted the whole lot, he explained that such a quest would lead me into exactly opposite directions at one and the same time, *i.e.*, I was proposing something impossible!

If I wanted nyan I must go to Ladak, and Leh was sixteen solid marches, nor could I start for some time on account of snow. He could help me by getting Sven Hedin's camp equipment to meet me half way, and up to that point there were small rest houses. This would reduce my baggage coolies. If I wanted mar-khor (and every sportsman put a good mar-khor first amongst Kashmir trophies), the best place was the Kajnag range (south of Kashmir).

I found there was a chance of getting the celebrated Mozi nullah in the Kajnag if I agreed to another officer—then in Nedou's hotel—sharing it with me. This decided

me to try first for mar-khor, and then go north-west from the Kajnag range for ibex and brown bear. Meanwhile, although the season for stag had closed, I was offered a block in the Maharajah's private preserves, in case I cared to try for a *barasingha*, on the chance of finding one that had not yet cast its antlers.

Prichard of the 24th (S.W. Borderers), my partner in the Mozi nullah, being in no hurry to start, I accepted this offer gladly, and got a fair stag in the circumstances already narrated. I refer to the occasion I suffered so badly from the gross carelessness of Messrs. Kynoch's cartridge packers. The block was only a dozen miles from Srinagar, and was one used to show sport to exalted personages visiting Kashmir. Permanent "butts" were standing on the slopes, from behind which these important officials shot at driven deer. Sometimes a good stag was bagged, but I have seen many *prickets* as a result of such shoots, which I should have been deadly ashamed to have slain myself.

In the Kajnag and Kafir Kund range of mountains the shooting season for mar-khor is divided into two periods, viz., 15th April to 14th July, and 15th July to 15th October. Sportsmen may march into and occupy their nullahs on and after the 10th of April and July respectively, on the understanding they do not commence to shoot before the 15th of each month. At the time I speak of particular nullahs were not actually allotted to guns—as is now the case—but you got from the Secretary some idea of who was likely to be a competitor, and then made your own arrangements to forestall.

Prichard and I, wishing to be first in the field, started early, and got to the banks of the river bordering our nullah on the 4th April, but could not cross over the bridge into our ground until midnight, 9th—10th April. The whole valley being under snow, we had first to clear sufficient space for our tents, and then pitch them on the six-inch-

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thick, flat, mud roof of a house ! Our position had a certain advantage as regards warmth from below, but many disadvantages such as lowing of cattle, crying of babies, odorous smoke (through cracks in the mud roof), and sometimes violent domestic quarrels, all from our friends underneath us !

Two days after our arrival a competitor turned up in the shape of an officer of Gurkhas from Abbotabad—the same sportsman who got the big mar-khor in the circumstances I have just related. It was an awful shock to him to see our tents. When he came to look us up, he was asked if he intended to rush for the bridge at midnight on 9th—10th ? As soon as he gave a satisfactory answer, he was well fed. At the same time, rather to our sorrow, he drank a very precious bottle of beer, finishing with a glass of port out of an egg-cup.

The same day we heard of another rival camped on the road ten miles short of us. Two days passed, but he did not come on. Hearing he was an old hand at Kashmir sport (a gunner, and it is to be noted that Kashmir is a happy hunting ground for all gunners ; they used to swarm there in the leave season) we thought he might make a night march for the one bridge. On the 8th April, as he had not moved, Prichard and I walked on to see him, and put the question !

To our relief he considered we had "moral claim," having got there first, and had no intention of opposing us, though he had hoped for the Mozi nullah, which he knew well. We voted him a very good fellow, and drank his health in his own beer. We also ate an enormous quantity of his provisions, for we had walked ten miles, and there was the same distance back again.

This all seemed very satisfactory, still we were taking no risks, so after an early dinner on the 9th we moved to the bridge head, sleeping there until midnight, very cold and most uncomfortable. Exactly at one minute

after twelve we crossed over, and were led by torchlight to our camping ground along two or three miles of a most awful track.

We had already spent five solid days, with nothing on earth to do but eat, on top of a mud hut. Now we had to wait for five days more under similar circumstances as regards occupation. I can still remember the dreadful boredom of those ten days, for there was not even a black bear to go after. Had I only known some publishers like Herbert Jenkins, Ltd., to help me and give me advice, I might have tried to write something even then.

That is the worst of Kashmir shooting in the season closed for birds. There is so much forced inaction, so much competition, so many restrictions, and such quite necessary limitations. It cannot be helped, I suppose, and, as a set off, animals are strictly preserved, which gives you a certainty. Again, the game laws are very well administered, which creates satisfaction. Other districts have now restrictions somewhat similar, and I look back with regret to the good old days, when you went where you liked, shot what you chose, and never saw a white man for months together.

## CHAPTER XIV

### THAR, GHORAL, AND SARAO

#### THE THAR :—

**N**EXT to barhel shooting I loved best to hunt thar. Perhaps I liked it the better of the two, anyhow I went after them much oftener, and have shot a great many. The very difficult ground, the hard climbing, the magnificent quarry (he is often bigger than a mar-khor, but his horns are small), with his long coat and shaggy mane, waving to and fro at every movement, always appealed to me tremendously. Herky Ross used to say no white sportsman should go on to thar ground without a friend near by. I wouldn't go so far as to uphold that, but the ground is often dangerous as I will show directly.

The head and mane, when set up, combine to make a fine trophy, but the horns themselves are poor little things, ten to thirteen inches long (one over fifteen inches is recorded) touching at the base, and diverging backwards in a sharp curve. From reading Burke you might gather the thar was only to be found in forests. This is not my experience, though very occasionally I have found it there. At all other times I have located this goat in bare precipitous rocky ground. The oldest male I shot, a very old one, was on a very steep hillside, composed of slabs of the most brittle, crumbling rock I ever came across.

One morning when taking a day off, my Gurkha orderly came to me about eight o'clock to say he had been for a stroll, and seen a very old and very big thar all by itself in a ravine about two miles from camp. Jumping up I was with him in about five minutes, munching a biscuit as we went along. Worse and worse got the ground, until the corner of the last spur above the thar's ravine looked nothing but a sheer precipice. It was just like the rounded bastion of a fort, but of friable slabs of rock instead of faced stones in masonry. Underneath was a straight drop into a lake fifteen hundred feet below.

I didn't like the look of this at all, though the bastion was only a few feet round. Still I was told there was no other possible route to get above the thar, who moreover had been feeding upwards. The shikari, slinging my rifle, went round the bluff like a cat, and threw back one end of a stout cord to the orderly on my side. Getting inside this I managed to clam against the rock with my stockinged toes in a small crack, and my right foot reaching out for any other cleft, or projection. Three times I did this, and three times funk'd going any further, so came back. Then I saw the orderly shake his head at the shikari, which meant I was not up to it. I could not stand this, so shutting both eyes, to keep out the view of that horrible lake, I made a final desperate effort, and got round *somehow*, pouring with sweat though it was intensely cold.

I now found myself in a little hollow of loose stones and rocks about ten feet square. Below was that beastly lake, aloft towered to the sky a tangled mass of ragged rocks sheer straight above us. In front was a ledge about eight feet high, on the other side of which I ought to see the old thar in its ravine.

Resting a little to get steady, I took the rifle, and climbed up a step to look over the top of the ledge. As I straightened up and gripped the ledge I felt, to my horror, that the huge

slab on top, weighing hundredweights, was coming away, and was only supported by my pressure against it !

Shouting a warning to the two men below they thought I was in some danger and, rushing at me, each frantically clasped a leg ! This was dreadful, and the slab getting heavier and heavier must force me down in a few seconds. Telling the two men in shocking language to jump to one side, I did so myself, when the whole fabric collapsed into our hollow with a tremendous crash, and thence right down into the lake below.

Little chance thought I of any thar after such a commotion, but I scanned the ravine carefully which was now open before me. Hearing something higher up I glanced skywards and *there* was the old male straight above my head, looking at me and about 150 yards away. It was a horrible shot, but sinking down I sat on my foot, leaning against the back of the bay, and pulled the trigger. Out came a chunk of rock just above its head, and, swinging round, it was evidently for making tracks, but just turned a little to have a final look at us.

That pause was the thar's undoing, for putting in another shot with an extremely fine sight I got it in the neck, by a fluke, and up it reared. Then came the most extraordinary sight I ever saw, and the picture of which I still retain indelibly impressed (like that of the charging leopard) on my mind.

Imagine to yourself three figures crouching in a hollow of some rocks on a steep precipitous mountainside. Straight above them, against the sky, a monster goat rearing, and then hurtling through the air, head down, legs uppermost, with a spurt of blood pouring, like a water-spout, from its jugular vein. In so direct a line for us did it come, that the orderly tried to pull me away. The thar's body, however, crashed with a horrid thud against the place where the slab had been, rebounded and, bumping against every

boulder *en route*, eventually rounded up on the beach of the little lake.

When we got down, myself with great difficulty, we found its horns and every bone in its body broken. So much so that taking up either hind leg you could throw it over the poor animal's back. The bits of its skull and horns being carefully wired by Van Ingen of Mysore, I have the hoary old face and shaggy mane looking at me always from the wall.

My wife saw a wonderful and curious sight one afternoon, in the rutting season, when I had gone after a big thar to some rocky cliffs opposite our camp. I had to make a wide detour to get there, but when actually on the spot was not a thousand yards, as the crow flies, from our tents. Below the cliffs was some open ground, only about six hundred yards from my wife. I did not find the big one, but getting into a ravine, which entirely hid me from our camp, wounded and then killed a moderate one all by itself, and carrying an eleven inch horn.

As the sound of the first shot reverberated through the hills, my wife ran out of her tent, with field glasses in hand. Across the open ground, at best pace, came a herd of twenty thar, all female except one very old male. Half way over they stopped, and formed a regular circle round their master. Hearing a second shot, off they went again guarding the old male by keeping him in the centre. Being very fat, it strongly objected to the pace, and there was shortly another halt with the same ring formed round the male. Then came a third and final shot, when the herd switching off to the right, and still keeping the old male protected, clattered down a cliff like a precipice,<sup>5</sup> and disappeared out of sight. I wish I had been there, but I knew nothing of this herd until I got back to camp. The big male was the very one I had been after!

One year, in the rutting season, I shot a good thar close to a camp far away from the one just spoken of. The

next year, in the same month, and at the same place, news was brought me of a solitary old male resting close to our tents. It was evidently on the move and tired, for it was not ground old males would choose. Taking out my wife, as it was easy ground for thar, we stalked this buck, and it was under exactly the same rock where I had shot the other good one twelve months before !

My shot was a bad one, went too high, and the thar fell out of sight into a hollow. Leaving my wife above, I went down and found it "spined," but very much alive. I could not well shoot as I was too close, and it was all rock, so I had to kill the poor beggar with my hunting knife. I never felt so like a butcher in my life, and remember breaking into a profuse perspiration, partly at the horror of the whole thing, and partly at the dread of my wife above finding out what was going on. She never knew until she read the rough copy of what I say here.

Now, although I struck hard, more than once, with a sharp and heavy double-edged knife, I found the greatest difficulty in penetrating its tough old skin.

#### THE GHORAL :—

This is the Indian chamois, to be found between 3,000 and 10,000 feet everywhere in the Himalayas. It is generally met with in small herds of half a dozen or so, but thirty years ago I once came across about forty altogether. As Sarabjit said in his comical way : " Exactly like fleas ! " It was early morning on a hillside that had been recently burnt, and they were after the new shoots of grass. I shall never forget the occasion for they were running about all over the hill, and I was so rattled I made terribly bad shooting.

The Ghoral is easy to get, but he affords good practice in hill climbing, and in up-hill and down-hill shots. The old males are often by themselves, and frequently when I have been stalking one of the small parties of six or seven

I have heard a hissing snort far above me, and away has gone a fine buck.

When I say "easy to get," I mean that, as the locality of a herd or herds is generally well known to the shikaris of the neighbourhood, if you go out after ghoral you ought to get one. The walking is by no means easy, in some places it is quite dangerous, and you may have a "wet jacket" long before you spot your quarry at all. Still, the animal is not shy, and any morning, provided you act skilfully, you ought to get your shot if you have been well served as regards *khabar*.

The horns are black, and run parallel, rather close together, with very sharp tips, slightly turned back. Seven inches is a good horn. I have never been able to touch the flesh as it is extremely "goaty." Sarabjit once shot a very young one, to tempt us when short of meat. To please him we had it cooked, but as soon as it arrived on the table we ordered it to be taken away at once!

Even in the hills where natural bullet stoppers abound, great care should be taken as to the direction in which you fire. I once missed a ghoral near a few acres of cultivation owned by a pensioned British soldier who, married to a native hill woman, had settled down in the mountains.

Adjourning to breakfast in the usual despondent frame of mind, after a bungle, I was shortly followed by this ex-soldier, his wife carrying an appalling half-caste brat, called Jacky (who looked exactly like a show monkey in his semi-European clothes), and a dozen of her relations. All talking at once, a very excited group assembled round my tent, demanding two hundred rupees (say £20) for a plough bullock they said I had shot. Indignantly denying the charge, and saying I had never even *seen* a bullock, I demanded to be shown the carcass. At this there was some demur, but eventually I was led to the homestead, accompanied by this large following, to find, not a dead



bullock, but a live one, chewing the cud and looking quite happy.

Unfastening him, the energetic and voluble hill lady (worth two of her indolent white husband) led it about to show me that it was lame from a wound in the dewlap, evidently caused by a spent bullet which was still inside. Although its lameness would probably depart in a few days I had to do something. That something took the form of a present of twenty rupees. I have never been able to understand how I hit it at all, especially in the dewlap.

Talking of ghoral reminds me of a mountain legend in Garhwal, a hill district in the United Provinces, given me by my old friend Hugh Rose.

Both Rose and I think it is referred to in Macintyre's *Hindu Koh*. It was actually told, however, in the form I now relate it, by villagers over the camp fire, to Rose and "Squire" Davis (a Garhwal tea-planter).

The legend runs, that once upon a time there lived in some mountain village in Garhwal a head-man, who got himself intensely disliked by all around him. His ways were crafty, unprincipled and base, while he was harsh and unmerciful in all his dealings. At the same time he owned a lot of villages, and wielded much power. So much so, that neither individually, nor collectively, did the villagers dare to oppose or tackle him.

At last things got so bad that the community put their heads together, and decided that something must be done to get rid of this abominable tyrant.

A ghoral was shot and placed, by means of ropes, on a particular ledge in the centre of a very steep precipice, situated not far from the principal village. A deputation then waited on the head-man, and explaining what had happened confessed none of them had the courage to try and retrieve the ghoral.

With him, however, they declared it was quite a different matter. He was so brave, clever and resourceful. So

bold and cunning a shikari, so strong and capable a man. Surely *he* could recover the ghoral for them, and so earn their eternal gratitude. They offered their services gladly with poles, ropes, willing labour, and anything else he required.

Flattered by their compliments and gratified by their eulogy, the head-man consented to make the attempt. He divested himself of all superfluous clothing, and taking nothing but a sharp knife and some thick cord, he was let down by the exulting villagers. As soon as he was safely landed on the ledge, the men above cut the ropes and left him to his fate.

Not that the villagers went away immediately. When the deed was safely accomplished a great shout went up to the skies. Men and women, from all the surrounding hamlets, collected on the top of the precipice. Sub-ordinate head-men shouted out their own names with taunts, such as :—

“ I, Tularam, have helped to put you there, you swine, you son of a dishonoured mother, you dirty off-spring of a sister's womb. Come and play the tyrant again if you can.”

For a considerable time the head-man existed on the flesh of the ghoral. Soon it began to get less and less and yet, think as he would, he could devise no means of escape.

Below him was a sheer drop of several hundred feet. Above the precipitous cliffs seemed to tower to Heaven, with not the least foothold of any kind whatever. Already the *lammergeyer* (vultures) were hovering round. The weaker he grew, the nearer they came, until, at times, they almost touched him in their downward swoop. It was these birds of prey that gave him an inspiration.

There were the long ends of the lowering ropes hanging down from his ledge. He got hold of these ropes, and divided them up into suitable lengths with his knife. One

end of each length he secured firmly round his body. At the other end he made a cunning slip-knot.

Stretching out the ghoral skin, he wrapped himself in it with the fleshy side out, and the head hanging down. Then he lay very still pretending to be dead.

First one bird came and settling on the skin pecked at the dead ghoral's eyes. Then another, then a third and so on. As each one settled the "corpse" deftly slipped his knot on to a leg, above the talon.\*

When he judged he had dealt with sufficient birds for his purpose, up jumped the "dead man" with a shout. The frightened vultures rising in the air carried him off; but, finding his weight too great a burden, descended quickly to *terra firma*, where the head-man, cutting the ropes, soon let them free.

The hill-men relating the legend, says Rose, paused when they got to this stage in their story, and their faces blanched. When urged to continue they whispered in their musical patois :—

"No, Sahib, we have done. The state of mind of those poor villagers when they beheld the emaciated enemy back from the grave, and the condition that enemy reduced them to when he had finished his revenge, are best left to the imagination."

THE SARAO (goat antelope) :—

Burke quotes of this animal (perhaps from Kinloch ?) :—  
"An extraordinary mixture of antelope, goat, sheep and donkey."

A very good description when you see its large ugly head, huge ears, and heavy body running to about ten hands at the shoulder. The horns are black and have been known to measure over twelve inches long, but ten is a good head.

\* Vultures are proverbial for the comparative weakness of their talons for so powerful a bird. By reason of this weakness they are unable to lift up and carry away their prey. That is why they feed on the ground.

In shape they are rather like a very enlarged ghoral horn. The animal has a most extraordinary alarm note, which can never be mistaken if once heard. It is a sort of mixture of heavy snort and steam whistle.

The sarao is to be found all over the Himalayas between 6,000 feet and 12,000 feet, and is generally considered rare because it is so seldom seen. Being very shy you will not often find it outside thick jungle between dawn and sunset. In short it is a queer, clumsy animal, rather difficult to bag and quite fierce when brought to bay. I narrowly missed being "horned" by one I had wounded. A most pugnacious old fellow.

The first I ever saw was in the Kumaon hills, when it was barely light in the very early morning. Sarabjit and I were walking along a forest path, and down to my left I saw a donkey browsing in the jungle. At least I thought it was a donkey, until the orderly stopping short, hissed "thar" in my ear. When I inquired, after I had shot the animal, what he meant by "thar," he explained that it was the name given to the sarao in Nepal.

Colonel B. M. Glossop in his book\* tells a good tale about sarao. The incident he records happened when he was out shooting with me near Mussoorie many years ago. At the time, Glossop was extraordinarily keen on shooting a sarao.

Toiling up a hill near our camp in the evening, dead to the world, having stalked all day and seen nothing, his shikari behind him suddenly said "sarrak" (which means "the road"). Glossop mistaking the word for "Sarao," though wondering at the man's complacent tone, dropped on his stomach at once and peered round. The shikari, thinking the sahib had seen something, followed suit. Glossop crawled forward, the shikari followed suit. Still unable to spot any animal and, trembling with excitement, Glossop got out his glasses and had a real good

\* *Sporting Trips of a Subaltern.*

look round. The result was no better. Finally he turned round to the shikari for some explanation. With great difficulty, neither knowing each other's language, the situation was made clear !

## CHAPTER XV

### A YOUNGSTER'S EXPLOIT

**T**O get from Simla into Spiti and Lahoul, on the western border of Chinese Thibet, you travel on horseback, or on foot, along the Hindustani-Thibet road, as far as the Wangtu bridge over the Sutlej river, a distance of 120 miles.

The road is what is called a "twelve-foot bridle path," and in excellent order for the first fifty miles, that is to Bagi. After that it varies a good deal, being extensively damaged every year by the monsoon. But one may safely say it is fit for laden animals all the way to Wangtu.

In many places the route passes along most formidable cliffs, the roadway being continued over the face of these cliffs by means of "galleries." These precipices have been the scene of many fatal accidents. Only 15 miles from Simla, between Fagu and Theog, at the Bargestan cliff, Mr. Cockerell and horse were smashed to pieces in 1873. Some 37 miles further on, near Sidhpur, Colonel Le Mesurier lost his horse in 1889. Over the Matla precipice, near the 94th milestone, Sir A. Lawrence was killed in 1864. Seven miles further, at the 101st milestone, Mr. Leather and horse lost their lives in 1890, and just beyond the Wangtu bridge a Miss Rebsch met her death in, I think, more recent years.

On the further side of this bridge, and across the Sutlej, a footpath leads off on the left to Spiti, over the Bhabeh

pass (15,700 feet). It takes three or four marches to get into the valley on the other side of the Bhabeh, and you have to take extra coolies with firewood, as there is none to be obtained *en route*. The track is pretty bad, but the natives manage to bring their hardy little ponies over it, and very often with a load on their backs too.

The main bridle path continues along the Sutlej to Chini and beyond. It was in the middle of the last century that Lord Dalhousie, when Governor-General, used to run away from Simla to Chini every year, at the first sign of the monsoon. He could not bear the rains, and so selected a locality where he was beyond them on a wide, open gently sloping spur at an altitude of over 9,000 feet. Near the ruins of his bungalow is the grave of Captain Henry Apperly of the Bengal Horse Artillery who died at Chini in 1845.

Rather a nice place to lie. From right under the tomb bubbles a little rippling stream. The hills around are blanched by the white leaves of the "southern wood." Across the valley are the "Morang" snows, with a magnificent view of the peaks, "Raldang" (21,250), "Morang Kailas" (19,866), and "Castle Rock" (18,110). Then below, thousands of feet away, is a greenish streak winding in and out through craggy gorges and precipitous defiles. Just the Sutlej river thundering and foaming along its rocky bed.

Lord Dalhousie chose a very delightful spot with grand scenery and a bracing climate. It is another matter however as to what would be said in these days about a Viceroy who went so far afield. One can imagine the questions that would be asked in the House of Commons and in the Indian Legislative Assembly should Lord Reading take it into his head to put 140 miles of bridle path between himself and his Council and Secretaries, and for a period from July to October, without even a single wire for communication purposes!

Along the whole route from Simla to Chini, every ten to fifteen miles, are staging bungalows, or forest department rest houses. Some have a *Khansamah* (cook and caretaker), who can provide the traveller with food ; all have a caretaker, and ordinary plain furniture.

Having introduced my readers into the necessary atmosphere, I can now relate how it came about that I used this route so many years ago (1884), and give a brief account of my aim, object and achievement.

I was then in the Cheshires and quartered at Solon, a small military cantonment on the Simla tonga road, and 31 miles from the summer capital. I am talking of twenty years before the Simla railway was constructed. Solon was then extremely dull. There was nothing on earth to do, except trot ponies up and down the cart road. My *fidus Achates*—a Major Sheringham—had gone off to Lahoul and Ladak on six months' leave. Having only been in India about four months I was not entitled to any, but by June was "fed up" to the teeth.

It was then there came to me the most daring conception a young subaltern ever conceived. I had the effrontery to put in an application for four months' leave, to go and meet my jovial major on his way back. My request was received at first with contumely, but later the Adjutant told me the G.O. would let me have about *three* months from the beginning of July.

I was overjoyed, but there were two serious difficulties to be overcome. The first was a financial one. I had lately bought a second polo pony, thereby exceeding my allowance "in anticipation." My monthly stipend as a lieutenant barely sufficed for my mess bill and ordinary expenses. In those days we had regimental paymasters, a very soft job. Ours was a married man so I asked him to dinner. After a liberal supply of alcoholic beverage I broached the subject I had so much at heart.

Although in the sort of mood that a child might have



played with him, the largest advance I could extract was three hundred rupees (£30). This did not seem very much for a three months' trip in the wilds, especially as I had to take a tent of sorts, and buy stores, but as events proved it was ample. I travelled about four hundred miles, bought a Spiti pony for eighty-four rupees (after three days' haggling), and had over twenty rupees in hand at the end of the three months.

My second difficulty was a rifle. I could not buy one, and it was impossible to borrow, as all my shooting pals had gone off on leave themselves. Finally I took a Martini-Henry from my company, squared the quartermaster to give me some service rounds, and substituted an expanding bullet for the ordinary projectile. A good shot gun I had brought out with me from home.

Thus armed, and accompanied by an English-speaking body servant who could cook ; a bhisti (Mohammedan water carrier) for odd jobs ; a pony with its attendant syce, and a small quantity of tinned stores, I started off into the unknown for my great adventure. The pony was not meant to be ridden. Indeed I did not take a saddle at all, but had a straw pad made for the pony's back on which were strapped a couple of my loads.

Expense being an object, the number of loads was reduced to a minimum. I got them down to eight including those on the pony, and embracing small tent, chair, bed, bedding-valise, covered-tub (which contained all my clothes, etc)., stores, cartridges, cooking pots, pony and servants' blankets, etc. I could only take the pony as far as the Wangtu bridge, where he waited a month for my return. It was impossible to run to a servants' tent, so the bearer\* slept under one fly of mine, and the bhisti under the other. Horribly they both snored. The syce and pony always went to the nearest village. Being afraid my money would run out I could not afford the staging bungalows at a

\* Body servant, but in this case cook and general factotum.

rupee a night, but invariably pitched my tent just outside their boundaries.

I may as well confess at once that with no knowledge whatever of the language, no experience in big game shooting, and in entire ignorance of the customs of the country, my journey at first was not exactly easy, nor did I succeed in making a big bag. There had been nobody at Solon to give me hints, and until I met Sheringham I made all sorts of mistakes. Moral—Read all you can before you start on such an expedition. Had I known in ample time possibly I should have done so. In short, my first venture can only be judged a success from the health-giving point of view, the glorious scenery encountered, the difficulties overcome, and the vast amount of experience and knowledge gained.

After Wangtu I took on a shikari at fifteen rupees (£1 10s.) a month. He was called Haridas and was a consummate rascal, besides being inordinately stupid. I disliked him so much I named him, with schoolboy absurdity, "Horrid Ass." When we got on to barhel (wild sheep) ground near the Bhabeh Pass he never told me, for instance, that we should stalk at daybreak, but took me out instead at any odd hour after breakfast. From my later knowledge, he was thoroughly lazy, and took no trouble whatever to find game. When we came across any, by accident, I must confess he was quite good at climbing, and the manipulation of bad ground.

I can still remember perfectly the first herd of barhel we found, and my intense excitement. Haridas spotted them about two thousand yards off, with my glasses, which were really not as good as his own eyes. We then did a stalk. I wanted to ask him about wind, but as we could only communicate by signs, when my bearer was absent, I had to refrain. There seemed thirty or forty barhel, and they were lying up, for it was mid-day.

When we got fairly close I was made to take off my boots.

Then came a horrible scramble in stockinged feet over a slab of precipitous rock with only a crack for one's toes, and a beast of a sheer cliff below. A boulder in front hid the herd, and behind this Haridas motioned me to take a rest, while he poked the great long Martini into my hand.

I was too excited to wait long. Creeping to the boulder I peered round it. The slope in front seemed covered with animals, and all, but the young ones, had horns. Some were within a few feet of me. Selecting a biggish ram I fired and saw the bullet hit a rock quite a foot over his back. I recollect he was about ten yards away !

Throwing all caution to the winds I stood up, and leaning on the boulder fired shot after shot. The poor bewildered animals ran here, there and everywhere, but none fell. At the seventh or eighth shot however one rolled over, and, putting down my unhandy weapon I made straight for him. But it wasn't a "he" at all, only a wretched doe, which I had killed with a fluky shot in the neck.

That was my first essay at big game shooting. Even though it was only a doe I was immensely pleased at having killed *something* ! Haridas was delighted because it meant meat. So was I a week later, when I had the first taste. Barhel flesh is just the most delicious mutton imaginable.

What Haridas thought of my shooting he could not tell me, but he must have felt afterwards as little confidence in that Martini as I had myself. My first act in getting back to Solon was to buy a .450 Express from a brother officer transferred home, which did me very well until I had to sell it during a financial crisis in order to pay my rent !

I came across a few ibex in Spiti, but never got a shot.

Perhaps it was just as well for they had poor heads. If I had only secured a good shikari I might have learnt

a lot of woodcraft, though ignorance of the language would have been a very serious handicap. As it was we had many stalks, but in every case the ibex either saw or winded us. Our *second* view of a buck was usually on a pinnacle of rock a thousand yards higher up.

My first march in Spiti was a cause of much consternation. I had told my bearer to order my usual eight coolies from the head-man of the village. Next morning fully *forty* turned up, about half of them priests, and the remainder women. As they began walking off with my kit (one carrying a tent pole; one a lantern; another an overcoat, etc.), I called to the bearer to stop them, as I couldn't run to forty coolies. He calmed me down by explaining this was their way, and that they would be quite satisfied with the daily sum total of two rupees for the lot. I found he was perfectly correct.

Talking of coolies I had no trouble whatever about them in Spiti, nor at any place where there was a forest officer. For example at Nachar, three miles short of the Wangtu bridge, a Deputy Conservator named Minniken gave me splendid hospitality, and procured coolies for me at once. From this place the number was increased from six to eight, as my pony had to be left behind because of the road. Anyhow he was not fit to go on.

The day I reached Nachar I left him all right at noon grazing near my tent. About three p.m., my bearer came up to the bungalow to say the pony was very sick. Running down I found him staggering about as if he was drunk, and then leaning up against the wall of an outhouse. Minniken told me it was a poison grass which grew there. We gave him a drench of hot beer and he got easier, but was some days recovering.

After two or three marches from Simla and up to Nachar, I had much difficulty sometimes in getting even my modest six coolies. At one stage called Bahli, 5,000 feet above Rampur, the capital of the native state of Bashahr, I waited

two days in vain, though the bungalow chaukidar\*, my bearer, the bhisti and myself all visited adjoining villages.

On the third day a dozen men turned up with heavy loads of flour tied up in goat-skins, and rested awhile near the bungalow. Unable to wait any longer, my bearer was directed to choose six of them to carry my loads down to Rampur.

"Quite impossible," they all said. Were they not carrying flour for the Rajah Sahib? Further, how could they leave it, and where could they leave it? Did I expect them to simply deposit it on the roadside?

Most argumentative and impudent they were; but the matter was soon settled by myself and servants picking up six loads of flour, and carrying them into the rest house. When the men saw the chaukidar lock the door and put the key in his pocket the six carriers gave in, and sulkily moved towards my baggage.

Still I was not very sure of them. Getting hold of my bearer and bhisti, I gave the former my revolver and the latter my rifle, having carefully noted that neither was loaded. The bearer was to lead the procession along the track, the bhisti keep in the middle, while I myself, carrying a shot gun, brought up the rear. As we fell in, the bearer was instructed to explain that if any man bolted he would be instantly shot! I think for a time they were quite taken in and really believed it.

All went well for about five miles when we came to a village on the road side. There, bringing up the rear and some little way behind as the pony's pack had been giving trouble, I found my eight loads on the village wall, the bearer and bhisti looking very crestfallen, and no sign of a coolie anywhere!

On inquiring from my servants what had happened it transpired that the coolies backing their loads on to the

\* Care-taker.

wall, as if to rest, had suddenly bolted into the village houses.

"Then why the devil didn't you fetch them out?" I said. The answer was that this was impossible because the village contained women only!

I am afraid I had no such compunction. Kicking open the first door, I found myself in a regular rabbit warren, with women running about and abusing me in what I am sure was the most dreadful language. Not understanding a word it didn't matter. The coolies were hidden in all sorts of queer places, but when I collared two, the remaining four followed quietly.

Short of Rampur came the river Nogri in flood. The crossing was a mile or so above its juncture with the Sutlej, and consisted of a wire rope to which was suspended a kind of narrow cross-bar on which one had to sit. The wire rope sagged horribly bringing one's legs extremely close to the raging torrent below. When seated, passengers were hauled over from the further bank by means of a rope attached to the cordage of the cross-bar.

But before crossing I sent over the coolies, and then the loads one by one, all of which got wet. The coolies were unlikely to bolt when payment was so near at hand; to say nothing about their bags of flour being miles the other side. Finally, before the servants and myself, came the pony. He could not sit on the cross-bar, so the ferryman said the only thing to do was to drive him into the foaming river.

I did not much like this idea. It was the third week of the rains, and the stream, some eighty feet wide, was rushing along its rocky bed at the most furious pace. Now and then I saw a huge boulder, to find it hidden the next minute by the whirling waters. Still I could not leave the pony behind, so I had to risk it.

At first I thought it would be better to drive him in loose and unhampered, to find his own way across. Then

I was afraid he might be washed down stream, or try to get back to the near side lower down. Finally I decided to fix a rope round his neck, and send the end of it over by the ferry. I badly wanted to handle the rope myself, but I had to drive him in, and could not be at both sides at one and the same time.

It was impossible to hear anything at the water's edge, so taking my bearer back a hundred yards I told him to take over the end of the rope, and explained how he and the ferryman should handle it on the further side. When all was ready they hauled gently while I drove poor "Warbler" into the river.

The first few paces were on shingle with two feet of water. Then came a drop at which "Warbler" shied, but a cut of the whip made him put out one hoof in the prettiest manner as if to paw the river. Another cut, and he regularly leapt into the torrent.

Then I held my breath, for nothing was seen for a second but four hoofs stuck up in the air above the turbulent foaming waters, and these hoofs were being rapidly carried down stream.

I thought he must be dashed to pieces against boulders, but as the rope took the strain the men held on well, and the pony came over to the other side on his back. Then to my great relief he got up, shook himself violently and began to graze!

After a few marches in Spiti I met Sheringham and we returned together. He had just come over a very high pass near Dankar, the capital of Spiti, and had some yaks as baggage animals. As befitted a field officer his tent was a biggish one and carried by one of the yaks. I happened to remark that some bits of the road were pretty bad for any laden animal. He rather sat on me, explaining that I little knew how surefooted a yak was.

The next morning, on our return march, we had to cross

the Spiti river by a "jhula"\* bridge over a hundred and fifty feet long. Sheringham went first holding his gun in his right hand, which also clasped the handrail. I was told to follow when he had gone about ten yards. Soon after I started he looked so funny shambling along the narrow footway, with his figure all hunched up, that I began to laugh, and could not stop.

With the river foaming down below Sheringham, when he was near the middle of the bridge, it was impossible for him to hear much; but my laughter shook the thing, and made it swing worse than ever. Looking round with much difficulty, and seeing my convulsions, Sheringham got in the dickens of a rage. He gave me a glance that ought to have killed me, but instead increased my mirth to such an extent that it was with the utmost difficulty I hung on at all, and I very nearly dropped my gun.

On the further side relations were rather strained, and after seeing his yaks loaded (which had crossed some way up the night before) we ascended a very steep hill in dead silence. The track was very bad, and as we neared the top, about 2,000 feet above the river, we sat down, and watched the yaks and coolies coming up.

The major's big tent was leading, with the driver some way behind. Close to us was a sharp bend with a jutting out rock. The load was heavy, and had been badly folded up, with the consequence that a corner hit the rock hard, and over went the yak.

We jumped to our feet, and saw the beast falling from ledge to ledge, and heard a squelch each time. Right down

\* A suspension bridge made of rope. Two hawsers, about four feet apart, are firmly secured to heavy blocks sunk in the ground, and then carried over substantial uprights to similar blocks and uprights on the further side. From the ground level a third hawser is run from bank to bank, and secured. This forms the footway, which is then connected to the upper hawsers by interlaced ropes. These upper hawsers form handrails for steadying the passenger. Such bridges usually sag tremendously, are very unsteady, and swing in the most alarming manner when traversed.



to the level of the river he went, but was hidden from view at the bottom by the slope of the hillside. I had just said I was afraid the poor brute must be killed and the tent done for, when the yak walked calmly into view along the bed of the river. He was moving towards the water for a drink, and the major's tent was dragging along the rocks under his belly. A pretty hardy customer, the yak!

The tent was rather badly damaged, and Sheringham had to be content with the inner fly for the rest of our trip, and that had a large hole in it. The yak was quite uninjured, and carried his load into camp that evening. Instead of rejoicing at his good fortune my companion said I was not apparently going to bring him any luck!

We delighted in the Spiti people, they were so simple, child-like and merry. At many stages the girls used to welcome us by lining up on the path laughing, singing and strewing flowers. Very picturesque they looked in their long blue gowns with nosegays in their hair, and bright colours round their waists.

The men were not so child-like when selling their ponies, but that is the way in horse-dealing all the world over. Their little animals—mainly greys of all shades—were very hardy, well shaped, compact little fellows with good bone, and averaging between twelve and thirteen hands. They lived on the hillsides in droves, semi-wild. Spotting one I liked very much in a herd which came galloping past my tent one evening, I told my bearer to find out the owner.

There was not the least desire to sell, and I had much difficulty in getting this lot driven up next day. I then selected the biggest which I didn't want. "Five hundred rupees" (£50) said the man, "and cheap at the money." This was ridiculous, and I offered fifty (£5). There was no deal over *that* pony, but I got on to another, and finally on to the little gelding I really wanted.

"Nothing doing," so I had them driven up again next day. "Wangtu" (his name eventually), could be bought

for two hundred rupees (£20), and that was the last word. The bearer counted out fifty rupees and placed them in five neat little piles of ten. He explained how advantageous it would be for the owner to sell his pony to such a great Sahib as me! It would redound to his credit all over Spiti!

The only action on this was to drive off the herd. The third day I had the same drove up again. The owner and his family were getting heartily sick of this game, but Haridas was really useful in compelling attendance. The only time he was any good to me.

The rupees were piled as before, but six piles instead of five. I noticed the owner liked the look of the cash. The bearer went through his usual patter, adding that surely it was not going to be a matter of filthy lucre?

He also explained that the Sahib could not carry too many rupees about as they were very heavy, and he must keep some for the return journey. Besides, would not the owner consider the honour that was being done him by the great Sahib taking his pony at all? A Sahib who did nothing but go up and down the valley scattering rupees amongst coolies for carrying a few loads!

And a deal more of such absurd nonsense, which nevertheless seemed to have some effect. After an hour or so the man said he would take one hundred and fifty rupees (£15). No! I couldn't do that, but I rose to seventy-five, and another pile and a half were added. The owner, looking hard at the bag from which the rupees were taken, remarked there did not seem many left.

I cordially agreed with him, and then suggested he should be a sportsman, and accept the seven and a half piles, plus the bag and its contents whatever they were. To my astonishment he said he would, and so "Wangtu" changed hands for eighty-four rupees, as there were only nine more in the bag.

But he would not give me even a bit of rope for a halter,

and as the pony snorted with fright whenever I went near it, it was a long job tethering it. Having no saddle I used to ride on a doubled-up resai\* fastened on to the pony's back with a strap from my bedding valise. A thick cord passed through this strap at the withers, and, looped at each end, served in lieu of stirrups.

Sheringham had also bought a pony. Rather a leggy mare, for which he gave a hundred rupees, higher up the valley. He was in the habit of crabbing mine until I sold "Wangtu" at Simla some months later, for two hundred rupees. He then confessed he was much the better pony!

Soon after I turned back with Sheringham the bird season opened. This made the marches and halts quite delightful. Although I was a shocking bird shot my companion was good, and had gained much experience with the Monal pheasant in former years. This glorious bird I describe later on in the chapter on small game.

It was about fifteen years before this trip, when in the Royal Scots, that Sheringham took leave in the Himalayas on purpose to try and capture some Monal alive. On reaching a favourite feeding ground he watched the birds for a day or two, and then constructed a circular fence of wire-netting round the water, and that part of the area for which they shewed the most partiality.

Small spring doors were fixed in the fence at intervals in such a way that they would open when pushed from the outside only. Noozes of catgut were also fixed at the entrances, and some birds were caught in these by the leg. Inside the wire-netting circle, plenty of grain was put down, with a little scattered outside, and leading up to the doors.

Sheringham bagged a good many and going to England shortly afterwards took them with him, trying to interbreed with our own pheasant at his father's home. This was a dead failure, although I forget at this interval of time whether it was the cock pheasant which was killed

\* Wadded quilt.

by the hen Monal or vice versa, or what ! Anyhow there were casualties.

On arrival at home Sheringham was offered a very large sum per brace for his Monal by the Zoo, but being keen on his experiment, refused. After two seasons' failure, and about to return to India, he wrote and told the Zoo they could have the lot, then some ten brace, at the price they originally offered. To his huge disappointment, the Zoo replied they had since obtained a supply and did not want any !

After much advertising, an old Scotch laird offered five pounds apiece. When accepting, Sheringham warned him of some peculiarities of the birds, and to be very careful to keep them in a "run" for at least a year, to enable them to get used to the new terrain. The old boy thanked him, but thinking he knew better turned them out in a couple of months. They were never seen again !

Living was very cheap on this trip. Deducting the price of the pony and my balance on return, I lived for three months on less than twenty pounds, including servants' wages. Tea and cocoa were the only drinks besides water. Chaupattis (unleavened wheaten cakes), peas, wild fruit, rice, eggs and an occasional chicken were the main articles of food. Occasionally I bought a young sheep for three rupees (six shillings), but it was very hard to persuade the shepherds to sell.

The best of the wild fruit was the black currant. Sheringham and I used to keep a coolie to pick these currants daily. Stewed with rice they made a very excellent dish. After the bird season opened we lived on pheasant and partridge, and I cannot remember ever getting tired of them.

At Nachar on the return journey we found Mr. Minniken entertaining two officers of the "Queen's"—a Captain Robson and a Mr. Hamilton—the latter afterwards General Sir Hubert Hamilton, and killed in 1914 when commanding

the 3rd Division. This he took over to France from Salisbury Plain, where I had been with him only a few weeks before. A very gallant officer with a fine record.

Both Sheringham and I came back extraordinarily fit. I had only one barhel to shew, with not particularly good horns. He had one or two bear, a barhel, and a kyang. The last is the wild ass, found in herds on the higher plateaus. A well shaped beast about thirteen hands, equine in form, but with the donkey's long ears and dark cross-shaped stripe down the back and forehead. The kyang is said to be quite untamable, but I am not sure this is correct.

I asked Sheringham why he had shot one, for it was no trophy. His answer was rather curious, namely that he had met several fellows, and each had shot one for its skin! He added that at first he could have shot dozens for he was always coming across them quite close. That they interfered with his stalking of Nyan, etc., most horribly, galloping off with such a clatter that they disturbed everything within miles.

Then, when he wanted to shoot one, for the life of him he could not get anywhere near to a herd. At last he got a shot, but it was a bad one breaking the poor brute's off hind leg. Sheringham followed for miles because so long as it was flat the kyang, on three legs, went faster than he did. At last they came to a hill, and Sheringham got near enough to put a bullet through its head.

By the time he and the shikari had finished skinning him it was quite dark. They then had ten miles to go back to camp, which they reached in the middle of the night, dead to the world. Sheringham was knocked up for several days. A just retribution for a rotten shot at an animal he ought never to have fired at, or wished to kill.

## CHAPTER XVI

### SMALL GAME SHOOTING

**M**Y old friend Harry Thornhill\* is the king of Indian small game sportsmen, and remarkably well versed in all that has to do with birds. To go out shooting with him, as I so often did, was a veritable education. Not only was it a revelation to watch him kill his birds, but there was not one he could not tell you all about—its ways, plumage, call, nesting-habits, etc.

His influence with natives was very great, respecting, as they did, his vast fund of knowledge, his prowess with the gun, his impartiality and his justice. He was such a true bird and animal lover, in every sense of the word, that his power over the latter was most marked. I remember at Bareilly he had a red monkey, "Koko," which he had trained, and which went out with him in an adjacent swamp, and actually found the snipe he shot. As the monkey hated the cold water, she used to slink along the edge, and dart in for a bird when called by whistle, and directed by hand.

A warm advocate of the small-bore gun, Colonel Thornhill has often upheld its merits in the columns of *The Field*,

\* Now Lt.-Colonel Sir H. B. Thornhill, K.C.I.E., C.M.G., Indian Army (retired).

and sounded the praises of W. R. Leeson—the small-bore Purdey—under the pseudonym of “Baldacha.” Hereby hangs a tale.

When he joined the old “Fighting Fifth” (Northumberland Fusiliers) at Bareilly, he noticed that the mess servants when given an order always called out “*Bahut Achchha*” (very good). Although a shy subaltern, he summoned up courage at last to ask one of his companions who “Mr. Baldacha” was, to whom the mess waiters always called ! The name stuck to him all his time with the Fifth, to which regiment he was, and is, devoted.

Possessing a most wonderful eye, whether for tennis, cricket or the gun and rifle, he soon came to the front as a sportsman, and if anyone during an Indian career has killed quite so many birds, certainly no one has done so as cleanly, and with so small an expenditure of cartridges. To see “Baldacha” bringing down snipe and mallard in a high wind at incredible range, with his 28 bore, was something worth watching.

He always loaded his own cartridges, and for mallard on the plains, or pheasants in the hills he preferred No. 4 shot in his left barrel. This he was in the habit of *oiling*. You can imagine the smallness of the pattern after that. But with his wonderful skill it was quite all right, and enabled him to kill birds at very long range, each one hit well forward.

I have heard of strange experiences he encountered when shooting at home with his 28 bore, at which many people look askance. At one of his earliest shoots—a very good one—he thought it right to tell his host, who was one of the old school, what he was shooting with. The old boy was most polite, and said how interested he was, that a lot of people believed in small bores, etc., but took good care Thornhill got a very bad place for the first beat. Only half a dozen birds came his way, but getting all of them in the head, the keeper soon told his master about it, with

the result that he was given the best places afterwards, and did extremely well !

But Thornhill could shoot with *anything*. To see him take up a gun or rifle and handle it revealed the artist immediately. Just like a violinist fondling a Stradivari, or a mother dangling her baby. At Bareilly he took to shooting with a "gulel,"\* and taught an old native to cast him round clay balls.

He got so proficient that he could shoot birds on the wing with it, even "swifts." Nothing was pleasanter than to watch him shooting crows in their evening flight at Agra, and hear his jovial "Hah ! Hah !" as the ball caught a fat old bird in the head or breast, or the crow ducked to avoid it. You could see the flight of the ball all the way, which was very instructive as indicating what happened with a gun. He taught me to use the "gulel," and after maiming my thumb badly for days, at last I hit a crow !

Regarding Thornhill's skill with "swifts," an amusing thing happened. The Fifth were dining a new regiment, and someone mentioned that one of the Fifth subalterns could shoot these tiny swallow-like birds on the wing with a pellet bow. This was received with incredulity, and bets were offered and taken in support of the statement made. The matter was shelved for the time being, or at any rate left in an indefinite form, but the wager was that he could not shoot three "swifts" with his "gulel" in half-an-hour. The actual match never came off, but at two dress rehearsals Thornhill got them in fifteen and twenty minutes respectively. From what I know of "H. B." I bet he has often felt bad about those poor "swifts." His is the kindest heart, and he will hate to

\* A two-stringed bow, with a piece of cane lashed between the strings to keep them apart. The pellet is held by a square piece of thin leather. With well made clay balls the weapon is a formidable one.



think of those days of his youth, when he butchered them to make a subaltern's holiday.

Sir Henry's two sons Cud and Charlie were beautiful shots from their earliest years, and close observers of birds and animals. Charlie, after being decorated with the D.S.O., M.C., and *Croix de guerre* in the war, died of an unsuspected heart strain in Lahore hospital, in 1919. Cud greatly distinguished himself in Russia, on which country he is now an acknowledged authority.

Charlie once had much the same experience as his father with his 28 bore, when on ten days' leave from France in 1915. An old friend asked him to shoot, and this friend's partner was horrified at anyone coming to shoot the birds he shared with a small-bore gun. Fuming and fussing, he refused to be comforted, and when Charlie turned up in his staff uniform, smiling as usual, he just let him have it. What was the good of a 28-bore? Might do very well for snipe and quail in India, but to think of trying to shoot English partridges with it was monstrous. Grouse and partridge required a 12-bore, etc., etc.

Charlie still smiled. That was always his way. Beaming on everyone, he went to take up his place, with a keeper told off to watch his efforts. Charlie fired nineteen shots, and that keeper picked up nineteen partridges!

Many hints have been given to young shots at the end of this book, and before passing on to bird shooting I have one other piece of advice to offer. That is to "*drive*" whenever you can and shoot as much in company as possible. My reason for saying this is, that in India many sportsmen shoot too much alone, and, with the exception of jungle fowl in forest country, and special duck or imperial-grouse "*battues*," hardly ever think of *driving*. Therefore the gun-shot feels puzzled, nonplussed and out of it in a party of other "*guns*" when put up against driven grouse or partridge at home. It takes him many days to show his

true form, even if he ever regains it, owing to nervousness and the strangeness of it all.

You can drive almost any birds if you want to. Snipe on a windy day—and most difficult shooting; the grey partridge out of crops into scrub; the black partridge out of sugar cane, mustard fields, or patches of grass; jungle fowl (*par excellence*) from clearing to clearing; and, in the hills, pheasants down the wooded ravines, and chukor\* along the slopes of the mountainside.

Another reason for *driving* is, that by this means you kill off the older birds, and so better your stock. We proved at Almora, with chukor, that this rule for increasing your stock of game holds good just as much in India as at home. I see Mr. Best, in his book I have mentioned so often, agrees with me, and he has much to say about duck and pigeon "flighting," which give you much the same kind of shots as driving.

Lieut.-Colonel Ewen Lang (late of the 1st Gurkhas) corroborates all I have to say in this matter. His experience particularly relates to Chitral, where there is very good chukor shooting. When his battalion was there they took to driving, and after the second year he had wonderful accounts, from the unit which relieved his, about the increased number of birds. Indeed, so good were the bags, that a hundred brace in a day was sometimes recorded.

I had some wonderfully good chukor driving by using my Gurkhas at Quetta. In one place there was a plain, with low hills running into it for miles. In the early morning the birds were well inside the plain near patches of crops. By hiding in one ravine of the low hills after another, and getting the men to walk quietly along the plain, the birds gave very pretty shots as they made for their haunts in the hills. In another place a long hillside

\* Red-legged partridge, and first cousin to the French partridge, so called.

was covered with rocks and boulders for a distance of two miles running east and west ; below were broad terraced fields. After walking the fields, and getting a few birds, the thing to do was to post yourself half-way up the hillside amongst the boulders, and, dividing your beaters into two portions, send one lot to the east and the other to the west. The instructions you gave them were for, say, the eastern portion to walk in line toward you, the other lot sitting still. When the eastern lot got up to you the men took cover, and you started the western lot by whistle.

I am not quite sure how the practice of *driving* birds started at Almora. The old custom had been to find a covey, walk it up, and after shooting a brace or so, try to follow the birds and put them up again.

I think it was Hugh Rose, "Murphy" Edwardes and some others of the 3rd Gurkhas who tried to get bigger bags by more elaborate arrangements. In this they were assisted by "Squire" Davis, a sporting tea-planter.

A beginning was made by taking on permanent shooting coolies, who, going out beforehand, located all the coveys, usually fifteen to thirty birds, but sometimes less.

On the appointed day the leader met the guns, having posted his men on the ridges of the surrounding spurs. These "look-out" men carried little white flags, and their duty was to spot where each covey went to when flushed, and signal with the flags where it had alighted.

Then someone suggested killing off the old cocks, and so, instead of walking up the coveys the guns posted themselves, and had the birds driven to them. One great advantage of this was that there was very much less continual walking.

In the hills near Naini-Tal (some thirty miles from Almora) Mr. S. L. Whymper, a brewer, used to get big bags of chukor. "Bumper" Sahib, as the natives called him,

was a very fine shot, as hard as nails, and excellent at making a bandobast.

His method was to employ a very large number of coolies over ground he knew held a lot of chukor. He went out usually for three or four days, beginning on the higher ridges and gradually working the birds down, moving his camp accordingly.

He always had the chukor driven, and "Bumper" himself did not let many off.

Chukor shooting is very hard work. I used to be quite done at the end of a day. But it made one very hungry and very fit. On one occasion I met Hugh Rose at dusk on a bridle path ten miles from Almora. I had just walked up about two thousand feet, having been at it since dawn. Rose had been in camp twenty miles further on, and was riding home, when he spotted my pony waiting for me.

As he was looking rather pale I inquired what was the matter, and he told me a new pony he had was giving him a lot of trouble, that he had walked the last ten miles, the road being a succession of precipices. Also that he had lost his food coolie, and so had taken nothing to eat since early breakfast.

We agreed to sample my food before mounting, when to my disgust I found the syce\* had sent on my basket, and there was nothing to eat or drink!

Just then a coolie came hurrying up, who proved to be Rose's. It was not his real food coolie, but one from his camp. Ransacking the box, we found a bottle of port, two tea-cups, a box of biscuits and a tin of sardines.

A horrible kind of meal, but nevertheless we quite enjoyed it. As we had no corkscrew, we had to break the neck of the bottle of port. We drank the wine out of the tea-cups to the accompaniment of sardines. The combination refreshed us enormously.

\* Native groom.

Rose looked quite a different man. Lighting a cigarette after the meal, he said in a most cheerful voice :—

“ Now I would ride any b——y pony, along any b——y road ! ”

I had a sporting Indian friend, attached to me for political purposes, on the North-West Frontier. We had many little expeditions together across the border for small game, when I found him a most entertaining and interesting companion.

In one of these trips into tribal country beyond Abazai, we were not quite certain about our reception, so I was advised to take an escort. This consisted of a dozen sabres of the Guides Cavalry. We had good sport, and when I was about to attack some sandwiches at midday, my friend told me to hold hard, as the tribe would be sending us a meal very shortly.

A little while later we reached an eminence about a thousand yards from the tribe's principal stronghold. Squatted below the summit was a collection of about fifty magnificent looking tribesmen, armed to the teeth, but very friendly.

The head-man, coming forward and showering compliments on me and my friend, begged the favour of being allowed to show us some hospitality. The political accepted for me, but said my health, after getting heated, would not permit me to sit in a cold fortress (!), so that any food provided must be brought to us where we were.

Our hosts showed no surprise. The majority of the tribesmen made off for the fortified village, the Guides dismounted to graze their horses, and we sat down.

Very shortly afterwards I witnessed one of the most curious spectacles I had ever seen. A long column of men appeared along the winding path from the stronghold, carrying every conceivable kind of dish and vessel, evidently containing all sorts of viands. These were dumped

down in our midst without any particular order, and we were asked to commence.

The first thing I was offered was a very rich *pilaw* made of rice, chicken, raisins and butter. Then half-a-dozen huge hard-boiled eggs without any shell. Next about six kinds of vegetables mixed up together. Finally, when I thought I was going to burst, a whole leg of lamb.

At this stage I complained to my friend in English of my incapacity to hold any more. Although he most politely sympathised, I could see he considered it a great breach of etiquette for me to refuse anything. He himself seemed to have no difficulty in swallowing all that came, and laughed and joked with the tribesmen while he bit huge lumps out of his leg of lamb, which he held in both hands.

I have omitted to mention two things. Firstly, that we had no knives or forks. *Pilaw* is not a *nice* thing to eat with your fingers, nor is a leg of lamb easy to take bites out of, and yet look respectable. Secondly, I was very thirsty, and took copious draughts of the sweetened tea provided. This came from the stronghold in large jars, alongside which were very pretty *china* tea-cups.

The tea took up a lot of room. It was very nasty sweet stuff, but I had a big thirst. Then there were several kinds of *chaupattis* (wheaten cakes), which I had started on (as they came first) like one does on bread. I was sorry afterwards.

When I had managed, after one bite, to secrete the leg of lamb in the herbage where we sat, I heaved a sigh. Not of satisfaction, I am afraid, but of repletion. I was horribly full, but still I felt I might survive if someone pulled me into an erect position, and pushed me about. Then, happening to look up my heart nearly stopped beating.

Filing out of the fortress was another long line of men carrying food!

This was too much. I appealed to my friend to try

and stop them. He said it was only fruit, such as bananas, apples, etc., and perhaps more tea and a sweet cake or two. He tried to divert my attention by telling me the man next him was a noted outlaw who had committed seven murders in British territory. That he was perfectly safe where he was, but if he put his foot over the border my friend would have much pleasure in hanging him at once.

In ordinary circumstances I should have been interested. As it was, my inside was so outraged I did not care who murdered who. I wanted to lie down and be quiet, but there were still the apples.

The undergrowth on the hillside was a godsend. In it I upset all the fresh tea, and deposited several apples and bananas. I hope the Guides found them, for it was now their turn to be fed. Goodness knows, there was ample provender.

This incident furnishes a good example of the magnificent and lavish hospitality of the frontier tribes. If only one was allowed to partake of it in moderation, and with the ordinary implements!

A somewhat similar occurrence happened to me shortly afterwards, within British territory on the North-West Frontier, in connection with a duck shoot. At the time I was commanding the Mohmand blockade line, and quartered at Shabkadr eighteen miles north of Peshawur, and close to the Kabul river.

Just above the cantonment of Nowshera, where the Kabul joins the Indus, lived two Nawabs on the banks of the river. They invited me to drift down the river in boats to shoot duck, have a meal with them, and then ride some twelve miles back to Shabkadr. They were to make all the arrangements for boats, meal and horses. Unfortunately they could not provide the duck!

Mindful of my last orgy with the tribesmen, I put off acceptance of this kind offer for some weeks. Then I had to fix a day to avoid giving mortal offence. I took

with me a colonel of Gurkhas and one staff officer, who drifted down with me, each in a separate boat. There were practically no duck. I think we fired about six shots altogether.

The two Nawabs, with a large following, met us at the landing place where was a band (which played "God Save the King!") and a guard of honour. The two potentates, although brothers, were on very bad terms with each other, and (but I did not know it) lived in separate houses. The one who was senior in the eyes of Government led me with much ceremony to his residence.

We were ushered into a very long room, got up as a drawing-room. That is to say, there were round tables, whatnots, heaps of photographs, and many easy chairs, all upholstered in red plush. The walls were covered with pictures and mirrors. Heaps of mirrors everywhere.

At one end of the room was a long, profusely decorated table covered with a white cloth, on which were deposited a number of dishes. Like a man who has paid a painful visit to a dentist I trembled at the mere sight of them. Presently we were invited to sit down to the meal.

I noticed that Nawab No. 2 had disappeared. Has he gone away, I wondered, because he dislikes being number two to his brother? Meanwhile, this second Nawab left his English speaking private secretary behind, who sat on my left.

The meal was very much like the one across the border, nor, even with such things as albums, mirrors and gramophones about, were we allowed forks. I ate as little as I could, but that little was a great deal by the time we got to the apples. The colonel and my aide-de-camp did themselves very well, for it was 2 p.m., and we had left at dawn.

Towards the end of the meal I noticed the private secretary getting rather fidgetty. At last he turned to me and said his Nawab Sahib was now waiting for me.



I had not realised I should be expected to make a ceremonious call on number two Nawab. As it seemed to me, however, that I had better see the whole matter through before riding back, I got up, and, accompanied by all the rest, including our host, we set out for his brother's house.

On arrival we found an exactly similar room. The same great length, same red plush, same furniture, same mirrors and, horror of horrors! the same long decorated table with similar dishes.

I saw at once that not to sit down and pretend to eat would give dire offence. How anyone could conceive the possibility of even a general being able to eat two huge meals with only a five minutes interval, passed my understanding. But there it was. We were let in.

Calling the colonel to one side, I asked him to do what he could. My aide-de-camp looked gorged, but I ordered him to make a *full* meal! Personally, I did my best with a good deal of sleight of hand amongst the table decorations.

Then I took those two officers back at full gallop, on the Nawab's horses, to Shabkadr. The aide-de-camp fell out half-way with a bad stitch. I met him at a territorial dinner in London last December (two years later), and he said he had not got over it then.

I recollect a lot of other episodes connected with duck shooting. Some of them I think are worth recording.

One of the first places in India I visited for duck was near Ludiana in the Punjab. I went with Jack Ramsay when we were subalterns together in the Cheshires, and marching to Ambala.

We could not start out until after parade, but were told the jheel was always full of waterfowl, as there was cover and good feeding. We reached the banks about 1 p.m., and found there was very little to shoot.

We were very sick about this, as we had ridden a long way. On demanding an explanation from the shikari who had deluded us, he said to Ramsay:

"Sahib, this is a good place, but there is a twelve o'clock gun at the cantonment of Ludiana (six miles away, as the crow flies), and the report has evidently frightened away the duck!"

We tried to make the best of it. Ramsay went one side and I went the other, where I fell into a hole and got wet over my middle. This was so uncomfortable that I took off my trousers and pattis to dry them in the sun. No sooner had I done so, than down came a flock of teal, and settled in some reeds in the middle of the water.

I went after them at once in coat, shirt and boots. The water being nowhere much over my knees, I shot like this the remainder of the day. I must own I felt rather itchy about the legs and thighs riding home, but thought little of it. The next morning the whole of my legs were just like a lobster, and I spent some days on the sick list. Much to the amusement of the colonel and everyone in the mess!

My friend Jack Campbell had a pal who slipped into a hole out duck shooting, like I did, and found himself sitting on a python.\* Both of them did record time to get out of that hole!

Campbell himself was once shooting snipe, and felt something hit his leg. He looked down thinking it was a stick, and found himself *standing on a cobra*. He did record time also!

As Campbell truly says, it is wonderful how few snakes one comes across in India. Campbell in thirty-five years saw about the same number of snakes. Seven of them were all seen in one day. At a time, too, when he was practising teetotalism, so he tells me. In over thirty-seven years out there, I came across even fewer than that, with the exception also of one day.

We were hunting near Delhi with the Cheshire regimental pack of foxhounds, to which I was a whip. The jackal

\* Large serpent sometimes over twenty feet long.

ran into a Mohammedan graveyard\* where hounds were at fault. I went in after them, and had to dismount, as my horse kept going into graves up to his hocks.

Suddenly I saw cobra after cobra sitting up, puffing out its hood and striking at the hounds. There must have been twenty or thirty snakes. Cracking my whip loudly, I was much relieved when I managed to put the pack back to the Master without one hound being bitten.

Yet, as regards snakes in general, there is a prevailing opinion amongst those who know not India that one comes across them every day. How often I have been asked : "Have you seen a great many snakes in India?" I trust these nervous individuals may read the actual experience of Campbell and myself.

Grass-snakes and other harmless ones I do not count. In the hills during the monsoon one frequently sees a grass-snake on the hillside, or crossing the path. As regards poisonous ones and the heavy toll these levy on the native, it must be remembered that this is mainly due to two reasons, (1) the damp, cramped and insanitary surroundings beloved by snakes, and in which so large a number of natives live ; and (2), the habit the natives have of going about in bare feet, or wearing only very slipshod slippers.

Friends of mine have come across venomous snakes in various alarming circumstances. At Solon in the year 1884 I remember Major Seely of the 2nd Cheshires coming into mess from his quarters one morning looking very pale, and calling for brandy. In opening a drawer to take out a handkerchief he had actually put his hand on a *Kraite*, one of the most deadly of all snakes. Providentially he was not bitten. He shut the drawer quickly, got a stick and then killed the reptile.

Three years later I was at Almora, and went to call

\* Mohammedan graveyards seldom have any proper boundaries, or paths, or any regularity about the lie of the graves.

on some people called Ashurst, who had a niece, a Miss Hutchinson, with them. As I reached the front door I heard piercing screams issuing from the first entrance to the left of the open hall-door.

I rushed in at once, and found myself in the drawing-room with Miss Hutchinson standing *on the table* screaming, and pointing at the lace curtains in front of a bay window. It appeared when she was pulling them further apart she spotted a snake moving near the curtain pole. I swept him off with a hunting crop I found in the hall, and killed him with the lash. It was a small *kraite*.

In one of my Bettiah shoots in the hot weather (the time I shot the big tiger) we camped on the fringe of a *sal* forest. A Colonel D. and myself went out in the evening, one moving north and the other south, to try and stalk a chital, but the ground being covered with dry leaves, I soon gave it up. Shortly after reaching camp I heard a single shot in the direction Colonel D. had gone. An hour later he returned with a magnificent hamadryad, which had given him an exciting time.

The colonel told us that as he was moving quietly in the jungle with a single coolie he heard something rustling in the leaves behind him. When he stopped he could neither hear nor see anything. This occurred three times, and he got quite jumpy. He saw there was a dry water-course a few paces ahead, and making for this he crossed rapidly, turned round and waited, with his rifle at the "ready."

From out of the leaves on the other side came a king cobra apparently going for him. Making a magnificent shot, the colonel got the snake in the neck with his .450. I forget the length, but it was a goodly sized one, and the skin made a fine trophy.

Not far from this spot the natives had frequently told Jack Lowis of a king cobra which lived in a big tree on the forest road and held up passers-by so often that a divergence was always made at this point.

But what are these adventures compared to the exciting incident which happened to a police inspector in the United Provinces some years ago. It was in the hot weather, and he was sleeping in the afternoon with his wife and four children in a row under a single punkah. Happening to wake up, he had to lie still and watch a cobra crawl over his wife, and all the children. Lie still, too, while he wondered which of the five would move, and thus get bitten. Fortunately there was no stir, and the snake, crawling down on the far side of the last child, got away.

An amusing, but for him a very painful occurrence, happened to the late General W. Hill when a major in the 2nd Gurkhas at Dehra Dun. The mess was a few hundred yards from his bungalow, with some cultivated fields between. When he was walking over to dinner in mess uniform one night in the rain, he trod on a cobra close to the mess, and jumping to one side felt a bite in his leg.

He rushed on to the mess, shouted for the doctor (fortunately present), and tore off his overalls as quickly as possible, explaining that he had been bitten by a cobra. A mark was found on his leg, with some blood, a deep excision was made, and the wound well cauterised.

Afterwards, as Hill was drinking a strong brandy and soda, a brother officer examined the overalls. He asked Hill where, to the best of his recollection, he was bitten. Hill replied that he had distinctly seen the cobra strike at the front of his leg just above his Wellington boot. But he had been cauterised *behind*, just below the calf! A further examination of the overalls showed that they were actually torn at this place behind, and that the tear had most evidently been caused by the spur on the other foot, in the rowel of which a small particle of cloth was found! In his fright at the sight of the hooded head, Hill had evidently made a prodigious jump, and caught one spur in the calf of the other leg.

## CHAPTER XVII

### MAINLY ABOUT WATERFOWL

**I**T would be a matter of supererogation to enumerate and describe the game birds of India. Works like those of Jerdon, Hume and Marshall, A. le Mesurier\*, and Stuart Baker† can be read in most messes, and in every library.

Young sportsmen should know all about the birds they are in quest of, their weight, plumage, habits, "calls," feeding grounds, etc. Besides being a very attractive study, it adds enormously to the interest of a day's shooting to be able to identify without a moment's hesitation, every bird brought to bag. As regards duck and teal this will be found no mean task either, for so many different species visit the plains of India every winter.

When I first went to India good shooting places were invariably handed over by one regiment to another at the periodical reliefs. When the advanced party of the relieving corps was formed, besides the quartermaster for "lines and barracks," the mess-president for the "officers' mess," etc., one officer of sporting proclivities was always included to take over the snipe jheels‡, promising partridge ground, duck resorts, antelope localities, likely meets of the local tent-club for pig, and the like. This officer, closeted for

\* *Game, Shore and Water Birds of India.*

† *Indian Ducks and Their Allies.*

‡ A jheel is marshy, low-lying, undrained waste land.

hours with the representative of the unit to be relieved, took copious notes, received over a bundle of maps and, if time permitted, was taken out to sample some of the regimental *preserves* !

My first introduction to snipe was at Peshawur in 1884. To try and get my hand in, I was to be found almost every afternoon on the "artillery jheel" blazing away at "jacks." I fancy the average was about one jack to ten cartridges. I used to watch each snipe I missed settle, and then walked it up again. This was continued until the bird was shot, or, more probably, died of fright and exhaustion. It was capital exercise in stiff bog.

A few years later I was somewhat comforted by a tale Thornhill told me of General Sir George Wolseley, a brother of the famous Viscount, when he was C.-in-C. Madras. As he was a terribly bad shot he got "H.B." to take him out one day after snipe, and coach him. They began on a narrow jheel about a hundred paces broad.

Sir George, having fired dozens of shots without getting a single bird (they were a bit wild), stopped and, walking over to Thornhill, they had a confab.

The General was told he was distinctly jumpy, and that although quick shooting was very desirable, he must be a little more deliberate, and feel certain his eye was on the bird before he put up his gun and pulled the trigger. To assist him Thornhill suggested that, when a bird got up, the General should eye it keenly, and, so as to make a pause, just say some short word like "Damn," before he put his gun up, or, for the left barrel, pulled the trigger.

Resuming their places, with a couple of coolies between them, the shoot was continued. Birds got up nicely and Thornhill heard :—Damn—bang—damn—bang. Oh ! bother the bird.

Then again :—

"Damn—bang"—and, after a slight pause "Damn—

bang, damn—bang; Oh! damn the bird!" And so it went on!

After a very short time this was too much for "H.B." and he began to miss himself. Then the absurdity of the whole performance tickled him to such a degree—as the acrid succession of "damn bangs" reverberated with terrific clearness over the still water—that he commenced to laugh. His silent shaking laughter soon increased to boisterous mirth, so that he had at last to leave the jheel, and throw himself down on the bank, convulsed with laughter.

When he told me the tale, he added, plaintively :—

"It took me some time to recover, and I couldn't hit a haystack the rest of the day, because every time I put up the gun I seemed to hear 'damn—bang.' The worst of it was the General was extremely huffy. He thought I had been pulling his leg, instead of honestly trying to help him!"

A more ambitious attempt for duck and snipe was a fortnight's leave in the old bed of the Sutlej from a railway station called Doraha, between Ambala and Lahore. Sheringham and I bagged such a lot of duck and snipe there, that we had much difficulty in getting them in by rail to the mess. But how heartily sick we got of eating them! So nauseous did they become after a few days that a hare was a much-prized addition to the larder, and I used to get up before dawn to try for a black buck. I shot two or three, one having horns over  $23\frac{1}{2}$  inches. This would now be looked upon as a distinctly good head. I do not remember thinking very much of it, though I had it set up.

I was most fortunate in this, my first serious essay at snipe and duck, to have a real bird-lover like Sheringham at my side. The notes I then made of the things he told me have stood me in good stead all my service. Many of them I pass on now for the benefit of those who, as I was then, are just beginning. The ground was also particularly helpful. The old bed of the river ran for ten miles or



more, and was very broad. It contained every sort of feeding ground the various waterfowl frequent in India.

At one time we were walking along a deep sluggish stream with red-crested pochard rocketting out of high reeds at every few yards. Delightful shooting if you were only able to recover your birds. Next came an expanse of marshy ground with just the right consistency of mud. Here were found the four types of snipe generally seen on the plains, namely : (1) Common or fantail ; (2) Jack, about half its size, with a short bill ; (3) Pintail, very like the common snipe, only not so big ; (4) Painter, a large floppy bird which I delighted in, because it flew so slowly, and was so easy to add to my scanty bag ! But when I found what bad eating it was, I left it alone.

Then appeared stretches of meadow land with little pools dotted about, in which were often a couple of mallard. Further on would be a reach of a small river covered with various kind of duck, which, at the first shot, got up with a whirl of wings sounding like a lumbering thunderclap. Here and there too, were patches of cultivation, where in the early morning we found two species of geese. The grey lag goose with its whitish legs and bill, and the bar-headed specimen with yellow bill, orange-coloured legs, and black bars on the back of its head and neck.

This everlasting shooting at something meant a large expenditure of cartridges, and although I started with a thousand I had twice to send in to our mess for more. These numerous shots also disturbed the teal considerably. The common and cotton variety were continually coming over our heads. A good quantity of the latter were netted by the natives, the bird falling an easy victim to the nets stretched across the streams, in the gloaming, because of its low flight.

On the evening of arrival at our first camp Sheringham was lazy, but I went out to shoot a duck or teal for dinner. I had not gone far when I spotted a couple of large duck on

the banks of some water. I stalked them very carefully, and getting up quite close took a pot shot. I wanted to make sure of producing a bird as Sheringham would hear the report ! One duck fell over, and I promptly missed the other as he rose.

The coolie was just as pleased as I was when we picked up the bird. Such a fine fellow, four or five pounds in weight, with a rich brown plumage, and black tail. We took it home, and Sheringham shouted from his tent to know what I had bagged. I remarked casually that I had shot a fine duck for dinner, and took it in to him. To my disgust he began to laugh at once, explaining that it was a brahminy, (ruddy sheldrake), quite unfit for the table, and never shot by anyone, except perhaps a railway guard or a British soldier. All the same it made jolly good soup.

The next morning Sheringham was not very fit and I went out alone again, getting a few snipe and three duck. One duck I was particularly pleased with, for I felt sure I knew the mallard. Indeed I had shot one or two in some marshes in Cheshire. Had not I seen also its prototype on the pond at home, with the green head and red legs ? This bird certainly seemed somewhat different for it was smaller, its feet and legs were not orangy coloured but bright red, the band feather on its wing was green instead of metallic purple, its breast shewed too much white, it had a very broad bill, and I missed the little curl of the four middle tail feathers.

This dissimilitude I put down to peculiarities in the Indian species, and took my first mallard to Sheringham with a good deal of pride. As I approached he called out :—

“ Well young Wart, what have you got ? ” (I must explain that my genial major called all young subalterns “ Warts.” He maintained it was a very good name for them, “ because they were just excrescences on the face of the earth ! ”).

In reply I produced my mallard with much complacency,

only to have my self-satisfaction shattered by Sheringham's remark :—

"I'm dashed if you haven't shot an old Shoveller now, the foulest of feeders, and another duck unfit to eat. You will be shooting a coot next !"

I was much hurt at this, for I did anyhow know a coot. I think I had told Sheringham how my men called it the black duck, and how my sporting colour-sergeant—who was a bit of a poacher—had put them right. I had listened with much interest, and some benefit, to this N.C.O.'s descriptive lecture.

He was really very instructive, for he told them what a wretched flight it had. How anyone could distinguish it from a real duck by the way it ran along the water, flapping its wings before rising. How its bill was quite different from a duck, and about the bird being black all over, bar the whitish bill, and the same colour above it. He even described how in flight it stretched out its legs behind instead of tucking them away like a duck. Finally he drew a picture of its feet, in his pocket book, and passed it round, shewing how they were not properly webbed, but had lobes sufficient for swimming, with the toes left free for gripping the weeds below the water.

All this I had taken in. And then to be told I should probably shoot one ! But,—

"There is some soul of goodness in things evil."

Sheringham saw I was hurt, and then he became really helpful. He asked if I had not seen any difference between my shoveller and the wild duck at home ? When I explained the discrepancies I have already alluded to, he told me I evidently knew the right bird, though I had forgotten the white ring round the neck, the chestnut breast, and the yellowish bill of decent shape, and not a monstrosity, broad at the tip and narrow at the base, like my horrid shoveller.

After dinner he talked of the female mallard and her

sober attire of brown, so different from the drake, though she had the same coloured feet and same purple wing band, by which you could always distinguish her from other uncoloured ducks. He passed on then to the four species of duck which are not migratory, but remain in India throughout the year, naming them as :—

- (1) The comb duck or nukta, nearly as big as a goose, the drake being easily distinguished by the black comb, like a piece of indiarubber, on its upper mandible. He told me the bird looked in flight like a black-winged goose with a white body.
- (2) and (3). The larger and smaller whistling teal. Sexes alike in both. Easily distinguished from other duck because the wings are *rounded*. Moreover, they always go circling about in small flocks giving a peculiar whistling call. Hence the name. No band on the wing. Colour reddish brown with grey tail and wings.
- (4). The spotbill, a fine brown bird with a yellow tip to its bill, and red spots at the base of it. It has a white patch on each side very noticeable on the water, and both sexes have a green wing band.

I sat up very late in my tent writing all this information down, but before the end of our trip we had shot many other varieties. Sheringham was most instructive. Every evening we had the "bag" laid out in front of our tents, and went over each bird. One night it would be, say, the brownish grey gadwall with its white wing band and orange legs. A very common duck in India. The drake distinguishable from the female by a black and chestnut patch on the wing, as well as the white band.

Next night it might be the widgeon with the short tapering bill of French grey, and the green wing bar on the drake. This drake is also to be known from its mate by its chestnut head with black spots, instead of an all brown plumage. It is a small duck.

Then my joy at shooting a couple of the gamey looking pintail. A most attractive bird with its long pointed tail, and graceful outline. The grey pencilled markings and broad green wing band of the drake give it a very handsome appearance. The female is dark brown with two wing bars something like her mate.

Perhaps the next day I would learn all about the common, the cotton, and the blue winged teal.

How the common teal is unmistakable ; the drake because of its varied colours, such as its chestnut head with green stripe, and the emerald colour of its wing band. The duck on account of her small size in "browns," and a similar band on the wing. Sufficient—like the female mallard—to distinguish her from all other browny duck.

Picking up a cotton teal my mentor pointed out its tiny size, talked of how much white it showed when flying, and how it was always in flocks.

The blue winged teal, or garganey, he declared was wrongly named, and showed me how its wings looked nearly grey. We admired its brown head, almost pink, and its very light green bar. Sheringham turned over the little female with his foot, and disclosed the whitened throat.

During our trip we shot four species of pochard, which Sheringham called the diving ducks. As we bagged them on different days I got quite mixed over them at first, but by dint of writing down all I was told, I managed eventually to keep them distinct as follows :—

(1.) The pochard proper, also called red-headed pochard :— This double name at first confused me dreadfully with the red-crested pochard mentioned below. Especially as the shikari always talked of the latter as *Lal Seer*, which means "red head." The drake of this pochard proper I noted as having a beautiful chestnut head, with a grey body and wing-bar ; the latter however hardly noticeable. The

female I thought rather like her mate except for her brown head and a more yellowy look all over.

(2.) Red-crested pochard :—There ought to be no difficulty at all in spotting the drake of this species, for its crest looks like an untidy red worsted ball stuck on the top of its head. Its bill is a lively pink. The duck is something like the drake, but the bill blackish, with a red tip.

(3.) The tufted pochard, or tufted duck :—Sheringham told me not to mistake this for that very rare duck the "golden eye," which he had shot in the Madras Presidency, where he had also found specimens of the pink headed duck. I noted all he told me about the golden eye with its green head and white patch below each eye, but I have never seen one. The tufted pochard I found entirely black with a white wing bar, a tuft hanging down behind its head and a yellow eye. I was very confused between the duck of this species, and the duck of the white-eyed pochard (which I mention next), until my attention was called to the yellow eye, and much browner head, of the former.

(4.) The white-eyed pochard :—This bird Sheringham described as the most ordinary duck in the bag, except perhaps the common teal, and to be easily identified on the water by its white patch behind. The drake had rather a black back and wing (a deep white bar on the latter) and a white stomach. I thought the female very similar until old "Sherry" at once pointed out her different coloured breast, and yellowy abdomen.

Besides the different species, and how to distinguish each, Sheringham knew all about their fitness, or otherwise, for the table. The brahminy and shoveller I have mentioned ! The widgeon, mallard, pintail, spot-bill, gadwall, red-crested pochard, pochard proper, and blue winged teal, he classified as A.1 eating. Other teal very indifferent, and remaining duck only fair.

I always look upon that shoot, and two more which followed, as most profitable to myself. Sheringham showed

me things innumerable, and, with the exception of Thornhill, I never met anyone better versed in the ways of birds, or more knowledgeable regarding their species and their plumage.

I must not forget to add that I very nearly committed another indiscretion during this shoot. It was in connection with crane. On the march from Peshawur I had been shown some demoiselle crane (*koolan* or *kunj*), and told what good eating they were. When returning early one morning from black-buck stalking, I saw two of these crane fairly near camp, and ran on for my shot gun.

Luckily Sheringham saw me and I was saved ! He came out with me, and having seen the birds told me they were the common crane (*sirus*). Very easy to shoot, quite unfit for food, associating in pairs, and commonly called the "Adjutant" bird. *Koolan*\* on the other hand he explained, being very shy and wary, were hard to approach, kept in flocks, flew high and fast in skeins, and were often mistaken for geese.

A few days later by dint of hiding in some tall grass we got a flock of *Koolan* put over us. I rather think I missed my chance, but Sheringham got one bird, if not a couple. We found it about the best eating I ever remember.

Those new to India will find nothing more enjoyable than quail and partridge shooting on the plains in the cold weather. Quail come in with the spring and autumn, the exact season varying a good deal according to the locality. The best way to get them is to make your temporary shikari procure "call-birds." These are tame quail, each one in a little cage. Half a dozen cages or so are attached to a pole, which is planted in the cultivation before dawn. At this time the little captives are full of "call."

The wild quail attracted by the sound, and being the

\* Sometimes shot by guns posted at a tank to which the birds flight. As many as sixty have been shot in a day by this means.

most pugnacious little varmints on earth, crowd round the pole. When flushed they do not go very far, and you therefore get good sport in a small area. It is usual to place several of these poles in the fields, some half mile or so apart. The owners of the cages are quite willing to hire their birds out for a small sum ; and to make quite certain, it is better to insist on the poles being placed in the cultivation the night before you shoot.

One hint about this is worth noting, and that is to make friends with your local superintendent of police if you can. Get *him* to arrange about the call-birds, and give two or three constables short leave to watch them, and see that the poles are duly planted. My best quail shooting has been with police officers. I remember a very good morning near Peshawur in May, when starting to shoot the moment we could see and stopping before 10 a.m., three guns bagged over a hundred brace.

This is another case of very early rising. It is the same with partridge and hare, unless you can get plenty of coolies, and the terrain lends itself to beating them out of high grass or heavy crops. I have had very many splendid days like this, and procured good bags.

But the early morning appeals to one most with its nice nip in the air, and everything fresh and green. From his winter camps, my wife's father and I used to have the most delightful mornings before breakfast. Those shoots I look back upon very often, and with the pleasantest recollections. To begin with he was a very lovable man, a charming companion, and a most unselfish shot. Starting at day-break at the season when the young crops were a few inches high, we walked in line for miles, putting up now a quail, then a hare, next a partridge and so on.

The black partridge is a very sporting bird, and the cock extremely handsome with its gamey red-brown head streaked with black, broad chestnut throat, and remaining plumage mainly deep black with white spots, or cross-bars.



The *grey* partridge is rather looked down upon, and supposed to be a foul feeder, but in certain localities it has many a time given me very good sport. The *black* partridge is particularly good eating.

There are lots of other partridges the sportsman will come across in India. For example the Painted Partridge which is very like the black partridge, but generally inhabits those portions of India where the black is absent, e.g., Rajputana. The Hill Partridge is to be found in many parts of the Himalayas, especially Garhwal and Kumaon where it is called the *peora*. This is a nice bird about half the weight of the chukor, having a chestnut head with a white line on each side of it. It is most difficult to shoot, for it flies low at a great pace, and is always found in dense jungle, generally near water. There are usually about five or six together.

Then there is the Swamp Partridge to be found anywhere at the bottom of the Himalayas in reeds and long grass, near swamps and rivers. One puts this bird up in coveys, and it is strong on the wing, but does not fly very far. The natives call it *bun teetur*, or *jungli teetur*. The cock is much bigger than the hen; a brown bird with a good deal of chestnut about the throat, neck and tail, which has light coloured tips.

In bare, broken and hilly ground, especially on the N.W. Frontier, in the Punjab and Sind a small partridge called the *Seesee* gives very good sport. It is rather addicted to running, and if much disturbed gets very shy. In some places I have come across very large coveys of them.

The Snow Partridge is a handsome bird nearly as big as the chukor, and has its *habitat* at high altitudes in the Himalayas. It is fairly rare, but I have often shot them in the hills well beyond Simla near Chini, and in Garhwal. The natives call them *koor monal* and *golabi* (pink) *teetur*.

Sand grouse are of various kinds. The Eastern Pin-Tailed visits Sind and the Punjab in the winter in large

flocks, but is extremely wild. The Common Pin-Tailed, called *Bur Teetur*, lives all the year round in many parts of India, and is not anything like so wary. It is fond of sandy plains, and until one is accustomed to the bird, it is a most difficult one to spot on the ground.

The Black-Bellied Sand Grouse, which the natives also call *Bur Teetur* and *Tut Teetur* is a winter visitor too. Commonly named "Imperial," these birds give good sport when coming to their drinking places in the morning in countless multitudes. Bikanir is famous for its imperial sand grouse battues. Large bags are also obtained in Sind. The bird is a much bigger one than the pin-tailed sand-grouse, and very fond of plough. Like all grouse it sleeps in the middle of the day.

Another permanent sand grouse in India of peculiar habits, and called *bhut bun* and *pahari* (hill) *bhut teetur* is the Painted Sand Grouse. This bird moves quite differently to the other grouse in short slow flights. It is less than half the size of the black-bellied sand grouse, and I have found it in thick undergrowth, on sandy hills covered with scrub jungle. It is the only bird of this species I have seen in heavy brush.

I have had excellent sport, in beats, with Jungle Fowl, (*jungli murgi*), both the Red and the Grey. The former looks very like a jolly little bantam, a couple of pounds in weight. With the morning sun glinting on its varied plumage it is a most taking little bird, but a tiger to take cover and run. My wife and I used to love to hear the cock crowing in the jungle in the early morning, and sometimes we would catch sight of a whole family.

The Grey Jungle Fowl is a larger bird, the cock weighing quite three pounds, and presenting a very handsome appearance with its black hackles, each feather of which has a yellow spot at the end of it. Like the Red Jungle Fowl this bird is shy, and a great runner. The only satisfactory way to bag either species is by beating.

The Bustard one finds in India are of five species, namely : (1) The Great Indian Bustard ; (2) The Little Bustard ; (3) The Houbara ; (4) The Bengal Florican and (5) The Lesser Florican.

The first I have shot with both rifle and gun. The cock is a magnificent bird weighing up to about twenty-five pounds, and measuring about four feet in length. I once got a brace in some plains of low grass near Delhi with a gun by walking round and round the birds gradually reducing the circle.

The Little Bustard only weighs about two pounds and the Houbara (cock) about five pounds. On the N.W. Frontier I have found the Houbara in kind of desert plains, and sometimes in long grass. They are such excellent eating that one took great pains to bag them.

The Bengal Florican is nearly as big as the Houbara, but the Lesser Florican much smaller. The former likes high grass and is only occasionally to be found in cultivation. The latter is very often in young crops, or in low jungle near big grassy plains. The natives tell one very curious tales of the Lesser Florican as regards peculiar jumping feats it performs in the nesting season, accompanied by guttural cries the whole time.

When John Broun of the Indian Civil Service was commissioner of Gorakhpur, and afterwards of Meerut, my wife and I stayed with Mrs. Broun and him in their charming Christmas camps, on two or three occasions. At one time it would be on the banks of a huge lake. At another in the *Kadar* of the Ganges.

With over a dozen guests, all merry and bright, with the kindest and most hospitable of hosts, and with excellent small game shooting, what could be nicer ? Sometimes we were shooting snipe on foot, or duck from a tiny boat. On other days it would be a case of howdah shooting with hare, partridge and deer as the main objective.

A word about game destroyers. If young sportsmen

would only shoot at sight the numerous destroyers of game that abound in India they would get ever so much better shooting. I regret to say my experience proves that very little trouble is taken in this matter.

Panther kill an enormous quantity of deer. So do wolves, the lynx and wild dogs. It is not necessary to urge the destruction of these four depredators, because every keen shikari is only too anxious to bag as many of them as he can. It will give him an extra feeling of satisfaction to know that besides obtaining a trophy, he is doing a great service towards the preservation of game.

The smaller cats are vermin in every sense of the word and should be destroyed. So, in my opinion, is the jackal, and where there is no hunting he should meet the same fate. As for weasles, martins, civets, mongooses, falcons, eagles, buzzards and owls, if everyone would make a rule of shooting them at sight, we should soon have a large increase in the quantity of feathered game.

## CHAPTER XVIII

### HIMALAYAN PHEASANTS

**W**HEN in quest of small game, it has always been bird shooting in the hills that has appealed to me most. It is undoubtedly hard work with a comparatively small result ; but the bracing climate, the delightfully cheery people, the varied bag, the stiff climbs, the glorious scenery, and the feeling of physical fitness, more than compensate for a less expenditure of cartridges than is the case with duck or snipe, or in a big battue for, say, sand grouse.

It is difficult to compare shooting at home with shooting in India, for conditions are absolutely different. Charming indeed it is to take your place in a grouse or partridge drive, to stand patiently in the low ground for the very highest pheasants to come over you from the woods above, to be one of a line of guns waiting for the larger grouse (capercaillie) to sail majestically along the tops of the fir trees, or to form one of a party walking through the roots and stubble. Still there is a subtler enchantment about the Indian bird shooting, due perhaps partly to the untrammelled conditions that exist, partly to the wild surroundings, and partly to the extensive nature of your ground.

Woodcock are obtainable in all mountain regions in the winter. They generally afford very difficult shooting

because, although in India the bird's flight is owlsh, it is often found in tree jungle. I have never heard of big bags, but at Ramnee in Garhwal one January I got thirteen in two days. The bird is usually flushed singly, though occasionally in pairs. I once saw three together. A peculiarity about the woodcock is that when you kill one in a certain favourite spot, another (like the tiger in a much liked swamp), will take up its abode there in a few days' time, provided the weather keeps suitable. When the spring arrives this bird leaves the altitude of, say, 4,000 to 6,000 feet for much higher ground. I had a pet ravine near Almora where one winter between November and March I bagged sixteen woodcock.

For pheasants in the hills you require at least one dog, if not more. The breed is not of much importance so long as it is a strong, biggish dog, has a good nose, is obedient, works to hand and will retrieve. The best one I ever possessed was a Gordon setter (Laddie), trained by me from its puppyhood, and cherished for fourteen years. Its death five years ago I do not like to recall even now. Delightful as it is to have a dog at heel out shooting, it is only for pheasants in the hills that one really needs a dog in India.

Chukor have been referred to more than once. I have mentioned elsewhere\* the method civil officers in Baluchistan employed to obtain big bags, but I quote here what I said then, because I think the practice so detestable.

"These shoots were most enjoyable except for the methods employed by Beatty, as well as the civil officials of this district, to obtain big bags. In Baluchistan water is very scarce, and chukor will not water at night. Some days before a shoot, all irrigation channels in the proposed area were stopped, and 'watchers' posted by day at all sources of water to prevent the birds drinking.

"The result was that they remained in large numbers near their watering places hoping for a drink when restric-

\* *Under Ten Viceroys*, page 119.

tions were removed. Coming to the first water-hole you put up dozens of birds, and although when really alarmed they took to the higher slopes and precipices, giving you lots of climbing, a good many had been bagged by then. As soon as you shot elsewhere they came back to their old haunts, thirstier than ever, poor beggars, and there you found them again later on. I tried hard to persuade the chief civil official to get this water-stopping put an end to, but was unsuccessful."

This system may or may not be responsible for the decrease in chukor round Quetta, which has become so marked that, as I write (1922) all chukor shooting is closed for a year. When it is re-opened I hope "driving" will be tried for a few seasons. The bird is too game a fellow to be scurvily treated, and not given every chance.

I look upon chukor as the cream of hill shooting. Hundreds of good days have I had after them. Associating in coveys, the bird is a fine partridge weighing over one-and-a-half pounds. It is most delicious eating, which you never seem to get tired of. One characteristic is a very noisy call from the sound of which the name is derived. This call is indulged in immoderately in the early morning or when disturbed, and especially when separated. In fact it is frequently the bird's undoing, for it gives its position away.

The Himalayan Snow Cock is a big grey bird weighing about six-and-a-half pounds, and only to be obtained at a very high altitude, say, over 10,000 feet. It is very shy, but sometimes a flock of them changing their feeding ground give you a shot. Thus it was with the first one I got, but I only winged it. The bird fell amongst rocks and boulders, and gave me a tremendous chase taking cover like a "tailored" partridge, and running like a cock pheasant. I was so pumped racing after it at that high elevation that I could not shoot.

The pheasants usually obtainable in the Himalaya are

kalig, koklas, chir, monal, and the crimson horned and Western horned pheasant (*tragopan satyra* and *tragopan melanocephalus*). The latter, often called the crimson breasted tragopan, is a very beautiful bird indeed, with a call like a cat mewling. I have only seen a cock bird once.

It was very early morning, only just light. I was walking along a mountain path, and something red ran fast across my front in some bracken. Taking a snap shot I had no idea what I had killed, until I went and picked up this glorious fellow with its black head and tail, crimson neck, red chest, and all its upper plumage a buff covered with white spots, edged with black. My wife was so delighted with it that she actually carried the bird in her arms twelve miles to the next camp, up and down steep hills, so that its plumage should not suffer.

But of all hill pheasants for sport, beauty, and magnificence, give me the monal. Imagine a great cock bird weighing over five pounds with a crest and head bright metallic green, a bronze green mantle and the back of its perfect neck a copper colour. The middle of its back, white; upper back, rump and tail-coverts purple; tail chestnut, and lower plumage black.\* Then imagine this glorious fellow, over two feet long, coming down wind in a pine clad snow valley at a tremendous pace with the sun glinting on the wonderful sheen of its faultless plumage, until it looks like some beautiful bird clad in shining armour. It is indeed a sight to stir the pulses, and make one wonder at nature's marvellous creations. To descend to materialism, the bird is remarkably good eating!

In the summer and early autumn, monal keep well above the tree line, the cocks often perched on pinnacles of rock on the mountain side. They are then extremely hard to approach as is the case later on in the season when in forests, if they have been recently disturbed. The first I saw was in 1884, in July, when going for a breather over

\* Description from W. S. Burke.



a mountain top about 12,000 feet high. I had of course no gun, but when walking along the uppermost plateau I suddenly came quite close on to a monal cock without in the least knowing what it was. It simply took my breath away.

A very curious incident once occurred with monal cock when shooting in Garhwal in the winter. Coming home to camp after killing a musk deer, and walking down a spur to cross a ravine I saw a solitary cock. It was standing in the dry bed of the ravine close to a coppice of deodar trees, and about two hundred yards away. Somehow the thought struck me how like a sentinel it looked.

Unfortunately my dog "Laddie," who was a bit ahead of me (for I was not thinking of birds, and had a rifle over my shoulder), saw it too, and started off before I could stop him. Calling for my gun I ran as hard as I could, loading as I went along. The cock, on seeing the dog, did not get up, but ran into the coppice with Laddie after it. Almost immediately a cock flew out and went down the ravine, then another, then a third, and so on. I got within range after the fourth or fifth had appeared, and altogether my wife and I counted *eighteen, and all cocks*. I got four out of them, but what they were doing there I have never been able to make out. It looked exactly as if they were holding a council of some sort, and as if the first bird we saw had been put outside to keep guard.

With no bird more so than the monal, it is very necessary to keep on thinking of the keeper's cry you probably heard in your earliest youth:—

"Now, Master George, on ter yer bird, and *swing*." There is a lot of swing required, and be *above* them. Some shots will be long ones, and many birds are not brought to bag simply because it has been forgotten that after, say, twenty yards the shot is dropping quickly.

The monal comes *fast*; so, if you are driving, there is another of the old keeper's entreaties you must bear in mind:—

" Kill yer bird in front of yer."

The Koklass. A very sporting gamey looking bird of handsome plumage which frequents forests and wooded ravines from about 5,000 to 9,000 feet. It does not run so much as the others, and can be flushed easily with a dog, when it gives very sporting shots, as it comes down through the trees uttering its hoarse call of " Koklass, koklass, koklass."

The Chir. A handsome bird with very long tail feathers. Its ground colour is buff barred with black. Hates getting up and will run and hide, if there is no dog to flush it. So close will it lie that I have known stupid beaters hit it over the head with a stick. This bird prefers steep glassy slopes near rocky ground, and is very difficult to see when hiding. When beaten out, or flushed by a dog, it comes very fast, calling out " chir, chir, chir."

The white crested kalij. To be found all over the lower and middle ranges of the Himalayas, especially near water. Very fond of jungly ravines near cultivation and below forests. It is a handsome bird, the head and neck of the cock being blue-black with a white crest. Is addicted to hill roads where it picks up pony and mule droppings. If disturbed it will run at a great pace up hill, providing delightful shots when flushed by a dog.

Splendid sport have I had with all these glorious pheasants. Never big bags, probably seldom exceeding six brace, but the grand forests, the hard walking, the difficult shots, the pleasure of seeing the dogs work, all makes a varied bag of, say, two monal, one or two chir, a brace of koklass and half a dozen kalij, fill you with pleasure and satisfaction.

The sportsman sees the very best of *real* India. The India he learns to love, and not the India of the cantonment and the city. He meets the simple villager of the plains or hills on his native heath, and gets to know him for the undesigning, credulous mortal he is. In the jungle too he will find good fellows everywhere. Rascals

among them of course, but the vast majority with traits and characteristics that appeal to one very strongly.

The stolid mahout waiting for the start, and thumping his elephant on the head to keep it still. The sportingly clad shikari with his putted legs, and wearing a Sahib's old shooting jacket. The wily old tracker with his dirty face, his merry eye and his undisguised contempt for all who know not the forest. The manly Pathan, who meets you in the morning with no hand salaam indeed, but with a hearty greeting of "Salaam, Sahib," and *perhaps*, "Salaam, Memsahib." The plucky gallant orderly who, instinct and experience tell you, will lay down his life for you, if required. The light hearted and cheery hill-man skipping from rock to rock, like a goat, at the Sahib's bidding.

Nor must I forget the devoted servant who attends the outset, and is distracted if he has forgotten anything which will affect the comfort of his cherished master. Nor the stoical and so-dirty beaters, looking bored to the world as they shiver in the early morning beneath their wretched blankets. But ready all the same to minister to your pleasure by walking for you and beating for you all day long, for a modest fourpence.

Cherish these people, young sportsmen. Talk pleasantly to them, chaff them, give them cigarettes and generally make friends. Besides the pleasure both will derive, it will amply repay you. And pardon them their weaknesses, failings, and little foibles, for the time will surely come when you will look back on all these helpers with feelings of affection, and marvel at your stupidity in not realising to the full what good friends you had.

Those jaunts in the jungle you will recall later as the happiest days you ever spent, though the remembrance must always be tinged with so deep and so great a sadness that they can never be lived again. May these lines remind you to say to yourself at the time :—

*Haec olim meminisse iuvabit.*

## CHAPTER XIX

### ELEPHANTS IN CAPTIVITY

**T**HERE is a good deal to be said about elephants. Perhaps no animal is so attractive, not only on account of its quaint personality, but also because of its docility and usefulness to man. Much that can be recorded should be now of the greatest interest, because so many of the purposes for which the elephant was formerly employed, when I first went to India—and before—have gone by the board. Indeed, the present generation can have no conception of its general utility in bygone days, and in every capacity both military and civil.

The large wooden gateways of many old forts in India are studded with iron spikes indicating one use to which elephants were put in the good old days. These spikes were intended to prevent the beast acting as a battering ram in an assault, by pushing with its forehead until the gate gave way.

Another military use made of elephants, probably from the time of Hannibal, was in securing the flank of an army. If a shallow swamp or suitable muddy ground existed on a flank, it was made into a much more effective obstacle by marching elephants to and fro across the surface. Their deep foot-holes acted as concealed "military pits"; difficult for footmen, impassable for cavalry and artillery.

Years ago, when a Hindu potentate died, his ashes were usually conveyed on an elephant to Hurdwar (where the Ganges debouches from the hills), to be cast into the sacred river. The journey was frequently a very long one. From time immemorial it was the custom for this elephant, on completion of its task, to become the property of the Brahman priesthood. As a rule, therefore, it was one of the worst in the royal stables !

Besides being necessary in the old days to sustain the dignity of native noblemen and people of means, the elephant was often kept for fighting purposes. An encounter between two tuskers was a show "stunt" at all big celebrations. These combative males were extraordinarily fierce, and they were also used by native rulers to trample to death unfortunates sentenced to be executed.

When I first arrived in India, elephants were to be found in military employ in every large cantonment. Amongst other things, they were used as part of the road transport for regiments marching on relief. We had a number of them with the Cheshires in 1884 when proceeding by road from Peshawur to Ambala. The only load each carried was one big double-fly tent, called an E.P. (European Private, and built to accommodate sixteen men). Anything else was considered derogatory to its dignity. Each tent weighed eight hundred pounds, which was exactly an elephant's regulation load.

They did many odd jobs in cantonments, and were much utilised for crossing unbridged rivers, especially in the rains. Assam and Burma were the last places where elephants were maintained by the Transport Department, as they were able to get over rivers and marshes (not bogs) which other transport could never face.

As means of communication were perfected, with many more miles of rail laid down, the employment of the elephant was not so essential. Also with military charges becoming more and more burdensome, it was cheaper to replace

it by the mule and the bullock, as being much less expensive to maintain. Indeed, this question of expense has so much to do with the gradual disappearance of the elephant as a beast of burden, etc., that only the wealthiest Indian rulers and princes can still afford to keep them.

The purposes for which they are used still may be classified as (a) shooting, (b) plantation tree felling, (c) weddings, (d) elaborate native ceremonies, and finally as a means of transport in very wild parts of India. The idea that the dignity of a big rajah required a large stud, or a small rajah, or other Indian gentleman, one or two, has partially exploded. In fact, the elephant has given way to motor cars, and to railway carriages specially built for the various Indian rulers.

To show how costly an elephant is to keep, it is interesting to note that, besides his chara,\* he requires daily some *gur*,† *ghee*,‡ and from ten to twenty pounds of *atta*,§ to keep him fit. The quantity of each commodity varies according to the amount of work the elephant is doing. The *atta* is made into huge *chaupattis* (wheat cakes). This is generally a task allotted to some small boy, probably a son of the mahout. Now when I first arrived in India, in January, 1884, *atta* was quoted at eighty pounds to the rupee. When I left, in the year 1921, a rupee bought one about twelve pounds!

There is one other use made of elephants in Burma which I must not omit to mention, as it is really rather wonderful. I allude to the handling of timber in the teak yards. The employment is mainly confined nowadays to Moulmein, and to the island in the Irrawaddy opposite Rangoon, where we saw them working in 1917. Rangoon

\* Daily allowance of forage consisting of several hundred pounds of bamboo and other stalks, leaves, grass and some sugar cane, if obtainable.

† A thick glutinous sugar.

‡ Clarified butter.

§ Coarse flour.

itself is now so large and so thickly populated a city, that elephants became unsafe, and they have been replaced by a remarkable system of overhead tackle worked by electricity.

The piling of the logs by these trained elephants is marvellously carried out, and with remarkable neatness and quickness. We saw the small timbers being carried, and the big ones levered and pushed into place. Some logs were dragged by means of a chain which the elephant itself unfastened with its trunk, as soon as the huge timber had been put into the right position.

No striker "downs tools" quicker than an elephant leaves off, whatever he may be doing, when the gong sounds for the midday meal and rest, or to end the day's work. He then goes straight to the river for a bath, and afterwards to his shed.

The work in these timber yards reveals to one how much the elephant can be taught, and to what a state of perfection he can be brought in undertaking certain definite tasks. At the same time, "Old Double End," as Rudyard Kipling makes his soldiers call him, is perhaps not half so cunning, nor so devoted, as is commonly supposed. Nevertheless, he is certainly very docile, can be easily trained, and is most gentle when well treated.

Rudyard Kipling's father (J. Lockwood Kipling) wrote a book some thirty years ago called *Beast and Man in India*. In this work he has much to say about "my lord the elephant," and points out how *Hindus* hold him in the greatest veneration. In their eyes, indeed, he ranks next only to the sacred cow. He also states that for years the best studs were always possessed by *Hindu* rajahs.

Natives, of course, will tell you the most extraordinary tales about elephants, all of which they firmly believe, or pretend they do. As I have pointed out elsewhere (see *Under Ten Viceroys*) the masses in India are

astonishingly credulous. The more impossible the fable, the more likely is it to receive credence.

I think it is Mr. Lockwood Kipling who tells the story about a mahout who behaved consistently badly to his charge. So much so that his companions wondered how long it could possibly go on. They noted that by bullying and hectoring the animal, the mahout maintained discipline and mastership, but they felt that the elephant's revenge must surely come in time.

One day, after a more brutal piece of cruelty than usual, the mahout fastened up his elephant and prepared to go to sleep. Knowing that when his voice and actions were still it was dangerous to be near the beast, he chucked it some pieces of bamboo and lay down on his blanket well out of reach.

"Double End" appeared to take no notice of him at all, but as soon as the man was asleep began to chew the end of the longest piece of bamboo stalk it could find, chewed it, too, very slowly and very carefully. When prepared to its satisfaction the stalk was pushed ever so quietly, and ever so gradually, towards the slumbering mahout.

On reaching the man's head with the chewed end, the elephant's actions entirely changed. Entangling the bamboo with the utmost rapidity in the long hair, and shrieking with joy, the great brute snatched the man its way, seized the body in its trunk and beat it to pulp between its fore-legs, afterwards stamping with both feet on the shapeless mass.

Mahouts and others entirely believe this, and similar tales.

It sounds like a paradox, but it is really true that an animal which can be trained to face an infuriated tiger is dreadfully afraid of pig, dogs, ponies and any small animals, while he is terrified of fire. A "sunder" of pig suddenly put up on the first day of a shoot in jungle



grass may send a whole line of elephants wild, as the piggies run about amongst their legs. What with the shouts and execrations of the mahouts, the thumping of the *ankus* \* on each elephant's head, the shrieks and trumpeting of the frightened animals, and their stamping and kicking at the nearest porker, one wonders what is going to happen next. After a few days, as discipline improves, beyond a squeal or two there is little alarm.

But an elephant dislikes any animal near it dead or alive. Mahouts are very careful to keep their mounts well away from anything shot, even a dead deer, until it is time to load and make the elephant kneel. If the animal killed is a tiger or leopard, the elephant, if allowed to tower over the spot, will probably stamp on it at once, and thus spoil the trophy. When loading one of the feline tribe, a youngish elephant will give sometimes a great deal of trouble.

Soon after I joined the Gurkhas, I shot a wild boar in heavy jungle, miles away from any "tent club" (pig-sticking club). Gurkhas love pig, and having several men in camp, I was very pleased. I had one "pad" † elephant, and calling it up gave orders for the pig to be loaded. Nothing loth the Gurkhas began to rope it, and the elephant was bidden to kneel.

\* The iron weapon with which an elephant is driven. This goad is about eighteen inches long and has a hook about three inches short of the sharp pointed end. On a tame elephant's head a raw sore is always kept open, as a precaution, and so that the sharp point or end of the hook can be inserted in the "raw" to keep the beast in order if fractious. The weapon is also brought down like a hammer on the elephant's head for minor faults like stumbling.

† A "pad" elephant is one used for beating, or for carrying loads or men, as opposed to a "howdah" elephant. When going long distances, or when making tracks for home after shooting, it is always advisable to change on to a "pad" as being much more comfortable and much faster, especially if you can select a good young elephant which will run, and travel six or seven miles an hour easily. The "pad" is a thick straw mattress fastened on to the beast's back by ropes running under his belly.

Then the Mohammedan mahout, seeing what it was, joined his hands together, and explained how he could not possibly have it on his elephant. I felt I could not press the matter, but I wanted the pig badly. We were four miles from camp, the boar was very heavy, I had only two Gurkhas out with me, and there were no coolies anywhere. We were all going back on the elephant.

At such times be thankful for a brain wave! Catching sight of a big thick rope on the pad of the elephant, I tied one end firmly to the pig and the other to the pad on which we all sat. Up got the elephant and we started off, but it made such a commotion when the strain was taken, and got so dreadfully frightened when it heard the body of the boar bumping and gliding along behind, that it promptly *bolted*!

Fortunately for us, I had secured the rope very badly on the pig, and the carcass, fetching up against a tree with a tremendous whack, became detached. I lay down flat behind the mahout, but branches swept off both Gurkhas before we could get the old *hathi* (elephant) under control.

Returning to the boar, we all three dragged it—and mighty hard work it was—on to a forest road. There we tried the elephant again, but now tied one end of the rope round its neck, and then over the top of the pad. It did not bolt this time, but went sideways all the way, keeping its eye on the now grimy carcass. So badly did it go and so uncomfortable was it, that after a couple of miles we stopped and, hiding the boar under branches and leaves, sent a party from camp later on to fetch it in.

In short, an elephant cannot bear anything, except one of its own kind, coming along behind it. In the case of a pony, the rider must either go ahead, or the elephant must proceed by some other road. Perhaps a dog is the most upsetting. Let me quote an experience or two.

The first occurred when I was very young and on the occasion of a brother subaltern and myself going to walk

up birds, but this pad was to take us to our shooting ground. Half a mile or so from camp my friend's dog was seen tearing after us. As the dog approached the elephant went sideways with its head half turned, and its eyes squinting round in the most ridiculous manner. Then, as the dog fell in just behind, having spotted his master, the elephant made a tremendous fuss and tried to bolt. As we did not in the least understand what it was all about, being new to the country, we interrogated the mahout. In the end my friend had to get down and lead his dog back to camp.

I joined the Cheshires at Peshawur with a prize bred bulldog called Muggins, and of course he accompanied me on the march to Ambala. The first march out, when my men were packing up for the next camp, I was sitting on a bundle of tents with Muggins beside me. As I waited up came the elephant detailed for that particular load. This two-tailed monster, approaching so close to his master, was too much for Muggins, who went straight for it.

Now a good elephant meets danger facing its foe, trusting to its trunk, tusks and forefeet for protection. In this case, however, the animal moving round with amazing rapidity considering its bulk, and letting out with a hind leg, fairly lifted Muggins high into the air, dropping the dog so close to me that I was able to snatch at its collar and secure it. Muggins was very little hurt, for luckily his rush had nearly got home. Had the dog been caught further away, it would have been hurled outside the camping space, with very few bones unbroken.

Everyone has read Rudyard Kipling's yarn, *His Majesty's Servants*, and will recollect how all the animals employed in the army were bucking together in camp. The elephant was boasting about being afraid of nothing. Its imposing manner, its immense bulk, and its reputation in the jungle duly impressed its hearers. Unfortunately, however,

a wee little terrier turning up just then began barking and snapping at the elephant's toes ! The poor old *hathi* was frightened to death !

Not only do small animals have this effect on an elephant, but so does anything which is strikingly unusual. At Mysore, when electric light had just been installed in the streets, a mahout, touching an overhead wire with his ankus, gave his charge and himself a shocking surprise. The elephant bolted immediately, and made a beeline for its stables. Nothing on earth would induce it to come out again for a month or more !

The smell of blood will sometimes upset an elephant greatly, and literally put it "all of a tremble." This is especially the case when unused to shikar. When Lord Hardinge, in his state howdah, was bombed at Delhi, it will be within recollection that His Excellency was very seriously wounded, and the umbrella bearer standing behind him was killed outright. The animal was made to kneel down while the removal of the wounded Viceroy and dead attendant was attempted. Alarmed by the smell of blood the elephant, in spite of all its mahout could do, suddenly got up and nothing would induce it to kneel down again. Eventually a rough staircase of boxes, brought from neighbouring shops, was constructed and formed a means by which the wounded and dead were brought down to the ground level.

As regards "fire," my father-in-law and I were shooting in the Hardwar jungles one spring with about twenty elephants. Moving towards camp in the evening, we found a very widespread jungle fire approaching us at a pretty rapid pace. Such fires arise very suddenly, travel extraordinarily fast, and make a most disconcerting noise ; while the air is filled with dense smoke, frightened birds, bits of stick, blades of grass, etc.

Now this fire was cutting us clean off from our camp, and gradually encircling us. On both flanks, distant a

mile or two, it was raging fiercely with mighty flames and a tremendous roar. Opposite the line of elephants, however, it had died out leaving only glowing embers of burnt grass and brushwood.

Putting our elephants at the charred jungle, we found none of them would face it. Telling the mahouts to push them at it, the whole line broke into loud trumpeting. Being still further pressed, first one and then another turned about and bolted, some at a moderate pace, but the outside ones at a very fast run, for they saw and heard the mountains of flames on their flanks.

If this retrograde movement had not been such a nuisance at the very time we wanted to make for home, and if any line of bolting elephants was not always a source of a good deal of danger, the spectacle would have been very amusing. As my beast was behaving fairly well, except that it would go the wrong way, I soon became the rear-guard. In front of me were miles of tall dry grass in which trumpeting and squealing elephants were bolting in one direction at various angles, while shouting and cursing mahouts were hammering them, and burrowing with the point of the ankus in the "raw."

Patterson was standing up in his howdah hanging on with both hands as it rocked from side to side, threatening to turn turtle. Some mahouts had lost their puggis, which vastly increased their vituperative energy, while one small elephant, the leader of the stampede, putting its foot in a hole came on to its head with a sort of squelched roar. This really stayed the rout, for when this little beast was got under control after its tumble, there was no difficulty with the remainder. We had to make a long detour round one flank of the fire and eventually reached camp, but after dark.

The horror of being on a bolting elephant has to be experienced to be thoroughly realised. One feels absolutely helpless, and the only thing to do is to hang on like grim

death. If in a howdah, you hope that you may not be thrown out, or that it will not overturn. The danger is, of course, intensified a hundredfold if you happen to be in tree jungle. You may then be ruthlessly swept off the pad, or the howdah may be knocked away by a branch over the elephant's tail. The beast meanwhile, being more and more frightened, will bolt harder than ever.

One of the most thrilling experiences of this sort was told me by the late Mr. A. M. Markham ("Rohilla" of *The Field*), when Collector of Bijnor in the United Provinces. He was out tiger shooting accompanied in his howdah by Mrs. Markham. They were following up a wounded tiger, but overshot the mark, with the result that the tiger, charging from the rear, jumped on to the elephant's back behind the howdah. The huge beast, a female, was a special favourite of Markham's and ordinarily most docile and tractable. On this occasion she bolted as hard as she could go, smashing and trampling down everything that came in her way.

So fast did she run that even the wounded tiger ceased to roar, and simply held on with its claws. Meanwhile, first Markham's rifles and guns, and then all the other contents of the howdah, including the lunch basket, went overboard. Next, a crash into a branch, and the tiger, Mrs. Markham and her husband all flew into space only a few yards apart. Markham told me that it was the most horrible moment of his life when he found himself struggling in ten feet of stifling hot grass, without any kind of weapon in his hand, not knowing what had happened to his wife, with a badly wounded tiger anywhere within a few feet, and the rest of the line of elephants God knows where!

This Indian civilian was an old and intrepid sportsman, who knew not fear, and his further actions show how wonderfully he kept his head in so terrible an emergency. Naturally his first objective was his wife. Giving sound to a low whistle familiar to them both, his delight was

unbounded when he got a reply and only a short distance away. Cautiously parting the grass, lest the tiger lay between them, he found Mrs. Markham safe and unhurt, but she could give him no information about the wounded animal.

For a long while, Markham said, they sat still listening, and for the first time he realised the great heat generating at the foot of high grass at about 2 p.m. in April. They poured with perspiration, which he described as due one part to heat, and three parts to funk. Then feeling that some further action was necessary, he convinced his wife that he must try and get hold of one of his rifles.

Creeping about on all fours, he actually found one after a long search, and although he told me he could distinctly *smell* the tiger, he saw nothing of it, nor was there any sound. His next move was to rejoin his wife, which he managed to do by keeping to his own tracks of broken grass. With a rifle in his very capable hands he felt secure, and they began to "cooe" in turn so as to attract the other guns in the line, or possibly his own mount, if brought under control.

They "cooeed" in vain, for there was no response. Then Markham climbed a tree. Even from that vantage point he could see no sign of them, but he saw something else, and that was a shawl of his wife's caught up in a fork of grass. It was now after 3 p.m. They had breakfasted at eight, and were both very hungry, besides being parched with thirst. To Markham came the intuition that near that shawl might be the luncheon-basket. With rifle at the "ready," he stalked that way, found the basket, and brought it back to his wife.

Little damage had been done, and feeling much better after refreshment, Markham then made a fourth venture and, securing a shot gun and cartridges, fired charge after charge. This had the desired effect, and within half an hour welcome shouts and a salvo of rounds heralded the

approach of the other sportsmen, accompanied by Markham's howdah elephant looking very depressed, and with dried blood stains on her flanks. It appeared the line had lost the tracks of the bolting animal as soon as they entered tree jungle, and were not put right until she rejoined them two hours later.

Markham then decided that the first thing to be done was to pick up the wounded tiger. Transferring Mrs. Markham to the howdah of another gun, and scrambling himself into his own, line was re-formed on the old ground. Within fifteen yards of where he had secured his rifle, the tiger was found lying dead.

Sportsmen have told me that bees upset elephants greatly, but that has not been my own experience, though I have been attacked several times out shooting. They certainly go for the mahouts and disturb the line, because the poor devils, covering themselves over with their puggris, let their charges go where they list. There should always be two or three blankets in every howdah, when there is any likelihood of meeting with bees. They are a terrible nuisance and often attack with great ferocity.

One day when out in my howdah, accompanied by one pad (on which was my Gurkha orderly and a shikari called Samander), I shot a sambar. My mahout slipped off his elephant's neck to *harlal*\* the beast, and I slid down the elephant's tail to have a look at the deer's antlers, and smoke a pipe. The old elephant was enjoying some nice leaves off a tree just above the dead deer. As she pulled away at the creepers to get at the bits she liked, she disturbed a bees' nest, and down came the occupants in a towering rage. When I called out for my blanket, the driver got up the elephant's trunk, and threw it down. Meanwhile the orderly and Samander had nearly finished tying the sambar on to the pad.

The howdah mahout, with his charge, went off fast,

\* Cut its throat, *harlal karna*, *lit.* — to make clean.



but the motion of throwing down the blanket, and the subsequent movement as I unfolded it and arranged it for protection, attracted the majority of the bees to me. There were several inside the blanket by the time I was covered over, mainly on the back of my neck. Smoking hard and furiously in the hope of choking them, I killed as many as I could, but there always seemed to be a stray one finding a fresh spot.

The next half hour was about the worst I ever spent. It was the afternoon of a hot day in May. I was sitting in longish grass covered by a thick blanket with bees buzzing all round, and a few inside. The perspiration poured off me in streams, and yet every time I lifted a corner to get a little air there was an angry buzzing, and another bee, or more, got inside. At last, in despair, I remained very still for what seemed to me ages, sucking at an empty pipe. This was duly rewarded, and eventually I heard the howdah elephant coming back. As I cautiously peeped out there was not a bee to be seen, except two or three which escaped from inside, and went straight away. I then called for my whisky flask and rubbed the raw spirit hard into my neck and arms, which were stinging badly. This was such a relief that I thought the orderly and Samander should have some too, for I felt sure they must have been badly stung. There was not a sign of either of them, or of the pad, nor had my mahout seen them.

Back we went to camp as hard as we could to do something for the poor fellows. At the confines the orderly met me smiling as usual, and I felt distinctly aggrieved on discovering that neither he nor Samander had been stung at all! The reason he gave me for their escape was, that when the bees came down he and Samander threw themselves flat on their faces, and lay perfectly still. A few bees buzzed round, but seeing a lot of movement from my side left them for me. The two of them were

soon able to slip away to the pad (which had moved off a few hundred yards) and then go home.

The moral of this is plain, and I never forgot it. Some years afterwards it served me well, but I shall always remember the enormous difficulty I had at first in keeping quite still. I found it required a lot of moral courage to be quiet with a bunch of bees half settling on one's hands, and a few walking over one everywhere. My hands were clasped at the back of my neck, as I lay face downwards on the ground. Finding no movement whatever the bees left me.

## CHAPTER XX

### ANECDOTES OF ELEPHANTS

ONE of the most horrible things that can happen with elephants is to get one bogged, usually called *phassaned*.<sup>\*</sup> The animal is supposed to clutch frantically with its trunk at anything within reach so as to place this substance under its feet, to give it some purchase. It is even said it will pull off its mahout for this purpose.

I am inclined to think this is nonsense. Anyhow I never saw any attempt to do so. I have known elephants chuck to one side heavy branches, etc., thrown to them, and at other times gladly utilise them.

My experience does not extend to an animal actually lost, or bogged deeper than about half-way up its body. This looks quite bad enough. I have heard of cases where the beast was saved by men actually groping down in the mud, and fastening a rope round one of its legs.

My worst experience seemed very serious indeed, and we only saved our mount, apparently, by getting the other elephants to bring a lot of heavy timber and throw it near the sufferer into the swamp. By the aid of this heavy timber, the poor beast obtained some footing and eventually got clear. The whole incident was horrible to witness and lasted hours. The wretched animal's exertions were

<sup>\*</sup> From *phas-gaya*, lit. entangled.

terrible and its cries heart-rending, for at one time it was nearly done in.

A very interesting thing to watch was the care the other elephants took not to get too near the one in difficulties. They were little inclined to get bogged themselves. No wonder! For anything like the state of exhaustion a bogged elephant is reduced to, it is difficult to conceive. A fat, sleek animal, after a few hours struggling in a bog, will emerge all skin and bone.

If you happen to be in a howdah, and your mount gets bogged, it is most unpleasant! The swaying from side to side, so long as the poor beggar is able to drag laboriously one foot after the other out of the morass, may throw you and your belongings into the mud.

Near a place called Regi, between Quetta and the Gwaja Pass, there is some treacherous ground, going over which I once nearly lost some machine-gun mules. Many years before, an elephant dragging a R.E. pontoon wagon sank in this quicksand, and went under in spite of all efforts to rescue it.

I once had the misfortune to kill a female elephant, or rather she died as the result of being *phassaned*. Poor thing, she was just a hundred years old, extremely staunch to tiger, and very comfortable to ride. Her name was *Imam Pyari* (Beloved of the Gods) and I had ridden her on many shoots. Her death was a sad blow to me and came about as follows.

I was shooting at Bettiah in Tirhoot with the late Jack Lewis, than whom a better sportsman never stepped. We were beating a narrow swamp for tiger on the Nepal border with heavy tree jungle on both sides. There were plenty of dry bits in the swamp, in one of which the "kill" had been located. The left of the swamp was Nepal territory, and two guns were on that flank of the line, which consisted of between fifty and sixty elephants. I was told to take the right, in case the tiger broke that way and, what-

ever I did, to remain in the swamp and away from the forest, keeping about ten paces ahead of the line.

From former experience I knew that there were some boggy bits on the right. The mahout and I discussed these, and he was told to be careful to avoid them. So he did at first, but it was most difficult to keep ahead of the line as our going was so heavy. Making a short cut we got *phassaned* ; not badly, but enough to make it a very severe strain for Imam Pyari, who was up to her belly every step with a heavy howdah on her back. We got out as soon as we could, and I changed on to a pad elephant, but she looked simply wretched and never got over it. Two days later on getting into a new camp she just lay down and died. Jack Lowis sent me one of her fore feet, set up as a letter-box.

Very occasionally an elephant will make no attempt to get out of a bog. A party were once shooting with Government elephants, and were unfortunate enough to get a female bogged. They did all they could, but she was lost. They were made to pay two thousand rupees for her.

The next year the same party got another female Government elephant bogged, very close to the same place. The whole of the guns were horribly glum, as she made no attempt to extricate herself. The head-man in charge suggested he could get her to move all right. He sent to camp for a tin of kerosine oil which he poured over her and then set on fire. She was out like a flash, and the party saved their money. The elephant, however, was "cast" a few months later for "loss of condition."

Male elephants periodically become "mast"\*, or mad, and remain so for a certain period, when they are very troublesome and difficult to control, besides being most dangerous. As there are signs when this is coming on, their keepers should be able to take precautions and chain them up. But no one is more careless than a mahout. He

\* Lit. drunk, lustful, wanton.

frequently omits to give any warning at all, and then there is trouble.

My wife's father was a fellow guest with the Duke of Teck (now Duke of Athlone) in a shoot got up by the late Mr. Aleck Lawrence, a Commissioner in the United Provinces. They were in camp after tiger. Early one morning one of their elephants, a tusker belonging to the Nawab of Rampur, went *mast*, broke its tether and disappeared. When the sportsmen were bathing and dressing, there were loud cries that the tusker had returned to camp, and was playing the devil. Everyone had to take to a tree immediately, in whatever state he was in. From their perches aloft they saw this mad brute kill bullocks, smash up country carts, trample down tents, and scatter the supplies and grain far and wide in its fury. Mr. Lawrence forbade any firing as the elephant belonged to the Nawab, and was a very valuable one.

Eventually the male disappeared, when dressing was resumed, and breakfast begun. In the middle of it, the servants rushed in to say the brute was returning, when it was the case of trees again. This time some of the poor bullock drivers were caught, and instantly killed, as well as a mahout who had ventured too close. But for this tragedy, it must have been highly diverting to see the stout and dignified civilians with their distinguished guest pushed up trees from behind by portly table servants.

The tusker again making off a telegram was sent to Rampur for javelin men. After locating the beast these plucky fellows armed with short spears walked round and round in a ring, of which the elephant was the centre, gradually closing in. When near enough to do any damage they commenced throwing their spears. One in a leg or foot and an elephant remains stationary for it cannot move on three legs. It is then a comparatively simple matter to approach and shackle it.

The party was very unlucky altogether, and the sport was

poor. Had a tiger been encountered, it was of course intended that the Duke of Teck should bag it.

One day they had very good *khabar* and a tremendously long and tiring hunt, but in every beat the tiger eluded them. The country though flat was full of ravines and broken ground. This made beating extremely difficult. Some of the party returned to camp independently in the evening, because they had been posted away from the line. Amongst them was Patterson. He told me he was so tired, he did not bother to change on to a pad elephant ; but, leaning back in his howdah, put his feet over the handrail in front.

His elephant was making for the nearest track to camp. On each side there was a ravine within a hundred yards. Suddenly a very big tiger came out of the ravine on the right and cantered across the open ground in front of Patterson. On the mahout calling out, *Dekko Sahib* (look, sir), Patterson jumped up, snatched at his rifle and, taking a snap shot, bowled over the tiger like a rabbit.

It was a great satisfaction at the end of a bad day, but all were sorry that the distinguished guest had not had his opportunity, especially because of the fact that it was a very fine tiger indeed—somewhere about ten feet—the biggest Patterson had ever shot.

Mention has been made of Jack Lowis of Bettiah. Originally an indigo planter, he was appointed manager of the native State of Bettiah in Tirhoot to put it into a sound financial condition, the State meanwhile being under the Court of Wards. Having met Mrs. Lowis before, I had the good fortune to be asked to one of their celebrated shoots in 1909, and afterwards went down from Quetta five years running, one year indeed going twice. On two occasions my wife accompanied me, and was called "The Mascot," because in whichever howdah she sat, its occupant was certain to see a tiger. The journey was three thousand miles by rail, there and back, and it was on the third occa-

sion that I got my first Bettiah tiger to myself. On one of the "floating bones"\*, which I gave Mrs. Lowis, I had engraved "9,000 miles."

The princely hospitality and extreme kindness of our hosts have made the memories of those ten-day shoots linger in our minds as the most glorious of all our sporting experiences. The grand jungles, the huge line of sometimes over sixty elephants, the pleasant company, the splendid and varied shooting, the lavish fare, together with the unselfishness of our cheery hosts are the happiest recollections to look back upon. Sad though to write about, for Jack Lowis has since gone West. Anyhow they could never come again.

It was on one of these shoots that we witnessed an elephant fight. The first day was always rather critical as the elephants came from different localities. On this occasion there were two tuskers known to be unfriendly. Moreover one was in the preliminary stage of *mast*, and the mahout should have given warning.

On one had been loaded the luncheon baskets and two khidmatgars†, on the other four more table servants. We were beating some grass in line for deer when there was a sudden commotion, and these two tuskers, who happened to be next each other, began to fight with coiled trunks, heads thrown back, and using both feet and tusks. Charging and butting each other with clashing tusks, roars and trumpeting, the four servants, and the mahout of one elephant were soon on the ground, while the driver of the other pluckily keeping his seat tried hard to turn his beast by using his ankus freely in the "raw."

The scene was a veritable pandemonium, for all the other beasts getting excited there was added to the fury of the fight the cries and hammerings of the mahouts, the shouted

\* Clavicle, varying in size from about 2 inches in a leopard to 3 or 4 in a big tiger. Found in the cup of the shoulder.

† Table servant.



directions of Jack Lowis, and the agonised tone of his lady's voice exclaiming :—

“ Oh ! the luncheon, the luncheon. Jack, do save the lunch baskets ! ”

The thought of sixteen hungry guests miles from anywhere with no food, entirely drove out of her head the danger to the white-coated servants struggling and bolting in the vicinity of the two combatants.

Fortunately the lunch elephant was top dog, and after knocking over its opponent the latter gave in. But when the conquered one got up and walked off with a most dejected air, without any mahout, the winner running at it three times with most comical little rushes, butted it hard in the hindquarters. No notice was taken by the beaten elephant, except that it looked more and more entirely disgraced.

The whole episode only lasted about two minutes. The row was so deafening, and so intimidating, however, that we were all a little pale when the runaway was collared, mounted and the line reformed. Luckily no one was hurt, although how the mahouts and khidmatgars escaped is a mystery.

I have mentioned an elephant's dislike to pig. When a wild pig is met with in the grass it always makes a strange metallic sound by blowing through its trunk, and beating the end of it on the ground. It does just the same when a tiger is about. This reminds me of an incident which seems to show that elephants have some means of communicating news to one another.

A few days after the elephant fight, Jack Lowis shot a big tiger in the swamp where I had killed *Imam Pyari* two years before. The tiger being only “spined” crawled under a heavy thorn tree, and none of us could see him to finish him off. Though unable to charge the tiger was very much alive, roaring furiously when anyone approached. The biggest tusker was sent for to topple over the tree. This

it did, though in doing so the tiger got one smack at it, and the claws tore open the fleshy part of its thigh. But the tiger exposed himself sufficiently to enable Jack Lowis to kill him. The blow was struck with such force that two claws were actually left embedded in the elephant's thigh.

The tusker was sent home to have its wound properly dressed. When the whole of the elephants returned to camp this tusker told them all about it, and the night long they were "talking" most excitedly. Being only a few hundred yards from our tents we got the full benefit of the conversation, and sleep was impossible. Next day the tusker was left at home, but we went after more tiger and getting into a regular *posse*, which is described elsewhere, the elephants became greatly excited because of the incident of the day before. On that occasion no one but Jack Lowis could have kept any kind of order, but his control over the mahouts was truly marvellous.

Our host always used a double seated howdah of a kind I have never seen elsewhere for shooting purposes. That is, there was room in front for his wife beside him, as well as for an attendant in the rear portion. All the howdahs I have been in were much narrower, with only room for the sportsman in front, and his loader behind him. Lowis invariably rode a very staunch, comfortable and steady elephant called *Kali*, some fifty years old, and with rather a curious history.

At the time of one of the periodical upheavals that used to occur in Nepal, when *Kali* was comparatively young, secret information of a projected *coup d'état* was given to the wife of the ruling prince. The fastest young elephant obtainable (*Kali*) was requisitioned in haste, the lady and her family were bundled on top of the pad at midnight, and a bee-line made for Bettiah in British territory. Travelling at a great pace straight across country the refugees reached their destination in safety, and *Kali* was added to the Bettiah stud.

Some twenty years afterwards there was an interesting development. Jack Lowis had been invited to shoot in Nepal, and was asked to bring any elephants he could. His head mahout coming for detailed orders inquired on what beast he would have his own howdah put.

"On *Kali*, of course," said Jack. "I cannot think why you ask. You know I always ride her."

The man reminded him of her history, and convinced his master that if *Kali* did go she would never return, as the Nepalese knew all about her. So *Kali* was left behind in Bettiah, and I believe she is there still.

Referring again to the book by Rudyard Kipling's father I remember he mentions how an officer told him of his strange adventures when escorting some elephants by sea from Calcutta, and he describes them. A few years afterwards this officer (the late General W. Hill formerly of the 2nd Gurkhas) happened to be my boss, and one night, when staying with us in Meerut, he told my wife and myself the tale so humorously that we literally ached with laughter long before he had finished. My tale may differ in some detail from Mr. Lockwood Kipling's account, but it is what the hero of the enterprise actually related to us that night.

About the year 1889 Hill arrived with his battalion in Calcutta, in the hot weather, *en route* to some expedition. On reporting himself he was told he had to take charge of forty elephants, ship them and hand them over at destination. In vain he pleaded that he knew nothing of elephants, that he was not in the Supply and Transport Corps, and that he had quite enough to do to look after his own officers, men, animals, and all the baggage, without the addition of a lot of elephants.

He was simply told he had been detailed for the job, and must load them next morning. Very wrath but feeling helpless he went off to the ship, and found that there was a crane for lifting them, with chains, belly-band, etc. The

elephants were to be lifted one by one, swung over a certain hatchway, and then lowered into the "hold." That sounded all right, and there were the mahouts and his own men to help. But the captain of the ship explained, when giving the height from loading platform to bulwarks, that it would be as well to find out the height of the elephants so as to arrange properly the length of chain adjustment, etc., required for the crane. Off went Hill to measure his consignment, and make his calculations.

Next morning at daybreak the task of loading commenced, but the first elephant, loudly trumpeting, was no sooner well off the ground than Hill saw at once that he had made an entirely wrong estimate. Instead of going up more or less horizontal, as he had seen with horses and mules, the beast became absolutely flabby, and went up exactly like a pair of amorphous trousers. This resulted in a length from its back to sole of foot of some thirteen feet, instead of eight or nine! Being unable to stop the crane immediately, the elephant reached the maximum height, and was swung inwards. But as it did not clear the side by feet, it remained hanging there, kicking in the side of the ship, until directions could be shouted out, the crane reversed, and the mammoth returned to land.

After a readjustment of calculations, things went fairly well for a bit. Half the consignment was got into the "hold" and tethered, so many in a row with heads towards the bow, and tails to stern. The twentieth elephant was a big tusker and when lowered, managed suddenly, with a violent wriggle, to dig its tusks into the boards of the deck *en passant*! On went the crane, and down went the animal's body until held by the tusks which were firmly embedded in the planks. Then came the enormous task of hacking them out, which was not done without serious damage to the tusker. However, he was eventually lowered into the "hold" in a pretty sickly state, and the remainder were safely embarked by late evening.

Next morning the ship sailed and half way down the Hugli river the tusker died ! It being impossible, of course, to drag out the body, this had to be cut up into pieces, and for hours *basket* after *basket* of elephant meat was brought up, and thrown over the side. All this time the " hold " was registering about 130° Fahrenheit !

Later on the ship commenced rolling, in a calm sea, in the most appalling manner, to the terror of all. At this juncture the Captain rushed down from the bridge to tell Hill that the elephants were all swaying from one foot to the other, and very soon the ship would turn turtle. This oscillatory habit is very common to these animals especially when feeding, ruminating, pleased, or angry. There was nothing for it but to order the mahouts to mount ; and, in the awful atmosphere prevailing, these poor fellows had to take it in turn, day and night, to sit on the necks of their charges to keep them still.

On completion of the voyage the ship anchored some half-mile from the shore. A large and portly Supply and Transport Officer boarding the vessel told Hill he had forty elephants which he (the portly officer) would take over when they were landed. Somewhat nettled, Hill said he had not got forty elephants, but only thirty-nine, and he would hand them over then and there. But the Supply Officer was not for that, and after a brief altercation disappeared over the side into his launch.

Then came the last and most complicated undertaking of all, namely, the unloading in mid-stream. Moreover it had to be done at once as already some of the animals showed grave signs of collapse, owing to the intense heat in the anchored vessel. Mindful of the awful mess, and indescribable state of filth, consequent on the death of the tusker in the hold, the skipper kept imploring Hill to get busy at once. Hill, poor man, was extremely perplexed how to set about his task. The lowering of thirty-nine monsters over the ship's side, into some fathoms of water,

was a comparatively easy business, but how was each one to be released when it reached the sea ?

Eventually it was arranged that the mahout should mount on deck. The animal would then be let down with a lascar\* clinging to the chain in order to unfasten the swivel when the water was reached. This seemed quite feasible, and up came number one for the great experiment. Unfortunately the lascar, in his eagerness to be relieved from his perilous position on the chain, let go the swivel too soon, and before the great beast was immersed. The elephant fell into the water with a mighty splash, losing his mahout, while the chain, suddenly released, acted like a catapult, and shot the lascar high up into the air !

Hill, watching from the deck, cursed that portly transport officer more fervently than ever, while he wondered how many lives he would be judged responsible for, before the unloading was completed. The lascar having been rescued, another one was substituted with better results, and the work continued until all the animals were off the ship.

The most disconcerting happening of all could hardly have been anticipated. When each elephant reached the water, it was so pleased at the delightful change from 130° in the hold to the cool river, that it dived down, down, and then—coming up—down again. The condition of the wretched spluttering mahout can be dimly imagined. Some were nearly drowned, while others, slipping off, were picked up by an attendant boat.

Such are some of the trials that befall the soldier-man in our Eastern Dependency. Nothing daunted he "carries on," and, though many such tasks are exasperating enough at the time, so keen is his humour, he sees only the comical side in later years. If at that stage he happens to have the humour and anecdotal ability of my old friend Hill, he becomes a potential source of joy to his friends and associates.

Very careful records were kept of all government elephants.

\* Indian sailor, usually a Mohammedan.

In native states too, it has been the custom for years to preserve in permanent form all detail regarding animals of the royal stud. An examination shows that an elephant is full grown at about twenty-five years, and lives and works in captivity until it is over one hundred years of age. The Bettiah State records showed *Imam Pyari* to be just over ninety-nine. I was once lent an elephant by that well-known sportsman the late Vincent Mackinnon of Mussoorie, which had been bought from government by his father, and was one hundred and five years old. A very staunch old lady she was, but tired quickly, and was apt to stumble in spite of getting an enormously large ration !

A baby elephant is about three feet high at birth. The height of adults varies considerably, an average male reaching nine and an average female eight feet at the shoulder. Of course there are abnormally big ones. A famous fighting elephant in the Bulrampore State was recorded as ten feet seven inches. A Captain G. P. Evans of the Burma Military Police shot a large tusker which he estimated to measure ten feet eight inches. It is a curious fact that twice the circumference of an elephant's foot gives, almost exactly, his height at the shoulder.'

Tusks vary too, to an extraordinary degree both in length, circumference and weight. The longest pair I ever heard of were nine feet ten and a half inches, and nine feet six inches respectively. They were slender though, with a girth of under sixteen inches, whereas nineteen has been recorded. The weight may be anything up to 150 pounds, though I have heard of a pair weighing over 170 pounds.

Enough seems to have been said about elephants in captivity to give the uninitiated some idea of their habits, idiosyncrasies and foibles. I do not pretend to have covered all the ground regarding their general utility. For instance, nothing has been said about their employment in some plantations to fell small trees and saplings which, having

over-turned with their forehead, they carry in their trunks and neatly pile.

In short they are truly wonderful animals. For example, in thick jungle they always know, not only how to make sure of and clear a path for themselves, but also exactly what should be removed for the convenience of those on their backs, whether on the pad, or in the howdah.

They are not, however, too good at judging the height of the howdah above them. In heavy tree jungle one often has to stand up and cut creepers with a *kukrie* to prevent the howdah being pulled over. Sir H. Durand, a Lieutenant-Governor of the Punjab, was killed at Tank\* by his elephant smashing the howdah into the top of a gateway of the city, which was of insufficient height to admit it.

Before passing on to the "wild" stage, a few words are necessary regarding the former use of tame elephants with heavy batteries, as for instance, when I first arrived in India. With their place taken, firstly by bullocks, and now by horses or tractors, a very picturesque ceremonial has disappeared.

Those heavy artillery elephants were well looked after, and admirably trained. At reviews the batteries used to look splendid with the well washed hides, good condition and brightly polished harness of their mighty draught. As they marched past the saluting flag, the elephants raised their trunks together in a coil, right over their foreheads. A form of *salaam* also practised in native states.

When the guns were required for action the elephants were replaced by a team of bullocks. One peculiarity here was that the drivers sat on the yokes, not looking the way they were going, but facing the tails of the cattle. In this position they were better able to guide, and also to quicken the pace by a judicious twisting of those tails.

In difficult places, with heavy guns, one elephant was

\* A walled city on the North-West Frontier forty miles from Dera Ismail Khan.



used to push the piece while another pulled. Mounted officers and N.C.O.s superintended, riding their horses right up to the monster, and sometimes giving it a whack with their whips. Being much struck by the submissiveness of their mounts, I found, on inquiry, that these were regularly picketed and fed in the elephant lines, until absolutely accustomed to the smell and appearance of such formidable apparitions.

Sir John Campbell gives me a touching incident of recognition by an elephant, which he experienced last winter when he went back to visit India.

He came across a favourite old elephant he had not seen for four or five years. She began at once to *purr* (he says there is no other word), and to search his pockets with her trunk, in the old familiar way, for oranges. Her driver had not the least doubt but that she recognised Campbell, and was trying to show it.

As regards howdah elephants out shooting, very few are naturally staunch. But both they, and their drivers, learn to have confidence in the sportsman in the howdah. No small thing this, when you are approaching a wounded tiger in grass ten feet high, with the mahout sitting on the elephant's neck some six feet below the man holding the gun.



*Photo, Herzog and Higgins, Mhow, C.I.*

**KING GEORGE MOUNTING HIS SHIKAR ELEPHANT.**



*To face page 274.*

*Photo, Herzog and Higgins, Mhow, C.I.*

**A LARGE TUSKER ALONGSIDE AN ORDINARY-SIZED FEMALE.**



## CHAPTER XXI

### ELEPHANTS IN THE WILD

I HAVE never shot an elephant ; nor, except going twice after a "rogue"\*, have I ever tried to shoot one. Of late years I may truly say there has been no inclination whatever on my part to do so. Four years ago I could easily have got a permit in Burma, but I did not even ask for one. I am quite sure it is a very exciting sport and sufficiently dangerous, but I like the old *hathi* too much to want to kill it.

The huge monster is such a magnificent beast, such a mountain of growth, so human, and so fascinating in its captivity. The idea of trying to lay low one of its species for the sake of a pair of problematically decent tusks, is positively repugnant to me. There is also the question of gratitude. I owe much to the assistance of the *shikar* elephant. It has given me hundreds of days good sport ; and though, just like wild ones, it has given me also moments of anxiety, still I love it.

Other sportsmen may think differently. A "rogue" too may require extermination, so every one should know the vital spot for the bullet. It is very necessary to reach the brain, which in an Indian elephant lies far back in the head between the orifices of the ears. If the beast is facing

\* A wild male, usually kicked out of a herd for vice, but occasionally belonging to one. A vicious, dangerous brute out to kill anything.

you on the same level a bullet in the lower part of the bump on the forehead, just above the trunk, should kill it stone-dead. If it is broadside on, a bullet put into the orifice of the ear will give a similar result. It is hardly necessary to add that the sportsman should get as close to his quarry as possible.

There is also another way of shooting, say, a rogue when your rifle is not very powerful, or you do not trust it implicitly, as was my own case on the two occasions I have referred to. The tip was given me by a very cute old shikari. When an elephant drinks, it lifts up one hind foot, resting the toe on the ground. If you can make a bulls-eye on the fairly thin skin of this turned-up foot the beast is helpless for it cannot go—as I have said before—on three legs. You can then get close up for the next shot in the brain.

An elephant must water. No animal is more particular about it. Twice a day must it have a drink, once after sunset and once about daybreak. Its spoor having a circumference of something between four and five feet, it is not easy to lose it, or to mistake its watering place.

A solitary wild elephant is usually a very dangerous beast whether a tusker, a *makna* (tuskless male), or a demented female. Beware of bungling the shot. A charge from a wild tusker is a terrible ordeal. The awful vicious gleam in the eye, the shrill trumpeting, the tightly coiled trunk, the head thrown up, with ears set back so far as to present a peculiarly malignant, narrow look. All this is somewhat intimidating, while the massive tusks and bulky, pliant knees seem peculiarly well adapted for the attack, and are certain to be used if a chance is offered.

As regards hunting for elephants, trackers will usually be available, and generally know their job. Let the sportsman, when he feels he has good men, leave them alone and be content to watch their clever, often marvellous, handling

of the proposition. It is quite fascinating. Supposing the quest is a solitary bull, and there is also a herd about, causing countless tracks, these experts will keep on that bull's trail alone with astonishing dexterity. If they are at fault or get puzzled—as they will at times—the Sahib must not be impatient at the delay, or feel hurt at being absolutely ignored. When a definite line is found he will be called forward quickly enough, and then progress, for a time, may be quite as fast as he desires.

When given a permit to shoot an elephant in any jungle (now very hard to obtain except in the case of a proscribed rogue) the limit is *one* only. The adjutant of the Bangalore Volunteers in Southern India obtained a permit some years ago to shoot an elephant in the Mysore forests. The night before he was going out with his trackers, a herd of wild ones came so near his resting place that he fired his rifle to frighten them away. Next morning he found he had killed a small one, and so lost his right to shoot a good tusker in proper style. Bad luck!

Solitary males and rogues are by no means uncommon; but, as a rule, wild elephants live in herds. I have never seen more than twenty or thirty together, but I believe in some parts of India and Burma herds of over a hundred are to be found. What has always struck me so much about these wild ones is their fat and sleek appearance, compared with their brethren in captivity. Also their quicker movements, and much less deliberate gait, especially when disturbed. Once in some very steep low hills, when stalking sambar on foot, I came upon a small herd suddenly, and the way they bolted down a precipitous hillside fairly astonished me. They certainly carried a good deal of the slope away too, but had I not, with my own eyes, seen them sliding down a sandy water-worn landslip I would never have believed an elephant could do it.

I fancy I got so close because there was a strong wind in my face. Elephants do not see or hear particularly

well, but their sense of smell is very acute. Jungle folk will tell you that they feed day and night, but this is an exaggeration. They certainly are abnormal feeders, and a daily requirement of some six hundredweight of green fodder takes a bit of time to gather and chew.

But I have myself seen wild ones resting and throwing sand over their bodies in the heat of the day, also bathing and wallowing. It is quite true they do not sleep much. Mahouts say about four hours out of the twenty-four. They always lie down to sleep. A herd of wild elephants is very exclusive and a little community to itself. Members of another herd are not allowed to enter. It is a peculiar fact that the leader of a herd is always a female.

Mahouts are very afraid of wild elephants. With them familiarity by no means breeds contempt. When a rogue is about it is very disconcerting to look down from the howdah at your mahout, and see him quite pale, which in a black man is a very ghastly greenish colour. My first experience of a rogue was with Herky Ross, in the Kumaon Terai, on my earliest shoot off an elephant.

We knew there was a rogue investing the forest road running to our next halting place. It had killed the driver of a bullock cart in the usual way, by seizing him with its trunk, and beating him to pulp against its forelegs. Then it knelt and trampled on him. Not satisfied with this the beast then killed the three bullocks, and smashed the cart to atoms. All this was witnessed by the driver's son, who had escaped and climbed an adjoining tree, where he stayed seven hours.

We put off our move three days because of this gentleman, and then the coast was reported clear. Some guns went with the ladies, while three of us, and Herky, started to make a line for swamp deer at right angles to the forest road, and about half way to the next camp. Before starting our host gave us each a packet of steel tipped bullets for our .450 or .500 rifles. At the same time he told us

on no account to shoot at the rogue except as a last resource, as wounded it would be much more dangerous. Nor, up to that time, had it been proclaimed officially!

Herky was on the left of the line, then came a pad elephant, then myself, then another pad, and so on. We were in tree jungle and after a little I missed the pad on my left, but saw some kind of elephant which turned out to be the rogue! Ross on the left had also seen it and scooted off, together with his pad elephant. My mahout's face was a dirty green as he drove his mount hard to get to the others in the line, which we eventually managed to do without being chased by the rogue.

I was fishing once below the cantonment of Lansdowne in the United Provinces. Suddenly I was aware of something behind me, and glancing round saw a baby elephant, about five feet high, not twenty paces away. It had approached quite noiselessly over the river sand, and presented the most comical appearance in the world as it stood looking at me with its head turned right on one side. I felt much amused until I heard a shrill trumpeting, and out came Mamma from the jungle, a hundred yards away. I was across that river in an incredibly short space of time. Fortunately "Baby" distracted her attention a good deal by trotting off towards her.

Mr. B. B. Osmaston, C.I.E., now chief conservator of forests in the Central Provinces, when he was a very venturesome young forest officer swam into a river, and caught a baby elephant. He had seen a herd crossing the river, and noting that a very young one was a long way behind the rest, he dashed in and collared it. The little fellow only lived a few days.

When Osmaston was staying in camp with my wife's people shortly afterwards, the conversation got on to cow's milk for children, and how much dilution with water was necessary. Someone said it was absurd to dilute it



at all. At this I heard Osmaston's sepulchral voice exclaim :—

“Is it not? Why I killed a baby elephant by giving it plain cow's milk!”

So that was the cause of the poor little beggar's demise! As an ornithologist Osmaston has a European reputation. I have already referred to him, anent tiger.

From what I have written it will be gathered that even when a rogue is committing serious damage, and is a real danger to life and property, it has to be proclaimed officially by the civil authorities before it may be shot. This is really necessary in a country of vast regions like India, because, without due inquiry, false cases innumerable would be presented. I do not mean to say that a man would get into trouble for killing such a pest when it was a matter of life and death, or for killing any elephant at any time to save a human being. But he would have to show just cause for his action, and prove that it was absolutely necessary.

As regards solitary males and rogues, the sportsman must, when shooting in reserved forests, just take his chance of trouble. He is shooting with a permit for other game, and if a wild elephant interferes, it is just his bad luck.

If he is shooting off elephants he may indeed have to move his camp, as has happened to me more than once. The animal may become such a nuisance that it is worse than dangerous to take out the line. Moreover his mahouts will probably strike, or anyhow give continual worry. Nor can one blame them very much, for in addition to the terror which possesses them of meeting the old sinner in the jungle, it is quite probable the beast will wander round the camp at night and disturb their charges.

One year, when shooting with a friend called Sutherland\*

\* A. M. Sutherland, Esq., C.I.E., late Chief Engineer, United Provinces Government.

in the Sawaliks\*, we quartered ourselves in a small forest rest-house of two rooms. To prevent wild elephants causing damage to the building a deep trench had been excavated all round at the distance of about forty feet from the walls of the bungalow. An elephant cannot jump either vertically or horizontally. The first night a wild *makna*† we had heard about turned up at 10 p.m., coming as far as the trench, stamping, roaring and trumpeting shrilly. Our own stud, about a hundred yards away in a grove, joined in and what with their din, and the shouts of the mahouts, there was a terrible commotion.

Sutherland and I ran out in our pyjamas. It was a bright moonlight night, and there was the immense beast not fifteen yards away in the devil of a rage. Strange to say it took no notice of the clamour in the elephant camp, but roared away at the trench, as if annoyed at its very existence. Every now and then, with its trunk, it would pull up a great clump of coarse grass by the roots, bang the earthy end most savagely against its forelegs, and then toss the clump high up in the air over its back.

It was evidently little use to say "shoo," for shouting at it had no effect. We got our shot guns, and fired many rounds in the air. Eventually it made off. Next day the mahouts were a dreadful trial out shooting. The day after they were worse, for we came across the *makna* in the jungle, though it did nothing. On the fourth day the head-man came to us and said they had spent three nights in trees because of this pest, and they could carry on no longer. We had to move right away.

When the present hill cantonment of Lansdowne was first occupied there were some fifteen miles of unmetalled road to be traversed between the railway and the hills. The last eight miles ran through heavy jungle infested by wild elephants. Ladies doing this journey were carried

\* Low hills below the Himalayas in the United Provinces.

† Tuskless male.

in a dandy, which is a kind of elongated chair with cross-pieces at the ends, for the men's shoulders. When Mrs. Mainwaring, the wife of the C.O. at Lansdowne, was making this journey a solitary wild elephant suddenly appeared out of the jungle. It halted on the track and, looking most vicious, barred the way.

Needless to say the bearers bolted immediately, and the lady was left sitting in the dandy in the middle of the road staring at the old bully. The situation was very perilous, and bad enough to intimidate the stoutest heart, but Mrs. Mainwaring was no ordinary woman. Looking straight at the elephant she calmly got out of the dandy, and opened and shut quickly, several times, the large white umbrella she was carrying.

It was a very brave act and a great deal too much for the tusker, who turned off and disappeared into the jungle. Mrs. Mainwaring had to call loudly then for the coolies, who were up in the branches of the biggest trees. Two of them had witnessed the deed, and the tale, losing nothing in the telling, was soon circulated in Lansdowne and the neighbouring villages, where ever afterwards Mrs. Mainwaring wielded an enormous influence.

The late Resident of Mysore (Fraser), when up in the Coorg district, met a deputation of planters in the jungle to ride out and discuss with them the route to be followed by a projected new railway. As they rode along the forest track, a wild elephant suddenly appeared and charged them. The planters, knowing every inch of the country, got away all right. Fraser's pony bolted, and the tusker gave chase. To his horror Fraser saw they were making straight for a precipice which lay right ahead, just beyond a large tree. With much daring, and the greatest presence of mind, he kicked his feet out of the stirrups and saved himself by swinging out of the saddle on to a big overhanging branch of that tree.

In some keddah\* operations attended by the Lieutenant-Governor, about the year 1889, and not far from Roorkee in the United Provinces, a very sad accident occurred to a Mrs. Anson, one of the guests. A rogue elephant was known to be in the vicinity, but it was thought that so big a camp and so large a gathering would assuredly scare it away.

The party proceeded on pad elephants to the appointed spot to witness the capture of a herd. Major and Mrs. Anson, were, I believe, leading and, so far as I can remember, no one had taken a rifle. (Shooting of course was out of the question for fear of disturbing the herd.) Anyhow the wild tusker was quietly waiting on a track running at right angles to the forest road being traversed by the party.

As the Ansons' elephant arrived at this spot the brute charged out, and in a second the major, his wife, and their mahout were hurled into space or inextricably mixed up with the fighting animals. Mrs. Anson was so badly crushed and internally injured that, although they managed to get her into Roorkee alive, she died the next day.

There are many ways of bagging a wild elephant, for example by shooting, which I have discussed. Then there is noosing, trapping them in pitfalls and capturing them in keddahs. The last method of course refers to the capture of a large number, *e.g.*, a whole herd with luck.

Noosing was a most exciting method. I do not remember ever having heard of its practice in Southern India or Burma, but it used to be in vogue in Nepal, and in Bengal. The disadvantages were : (1) That it was so great a strain on the tame elephants employed that they lasted a very short time, and (2) that *big* wild ones were very seldom, if ever, taken.

The very fastest tame elephants were selected, and three or four would approach a wild herd. On each tame one

\* An enclosure constructed for the purpose of catching elephants and described later. Lit. an enclosure or pound.

were three men, namely, the mahout to drive, the nooser on a pad, and a third man behind armed with a spiked mallet with which he hammered the poor beast's tail parts, when it was necessary to put on the fastest pace. It was this mallet, and the unmerciful use of the mahout's ankus, to spur the animal to the greatest exertion, which broke it down. Finally there was a strong rope, one end of which was fashioned into a noose, while the other end was securely fastened to the body of the tame elephant.

The wild elephants of course made off as soon as danger was scented, chased for all they were worth by the pursuers. It must have been glorious fun, with the quarry getting more and more excited, and blundering over all kinds of obstacles, or dashing through the densest jungle. At this stage the three hunters had to hang on like parasites as best they could.

The right plan was for the two fastest chasers to attempt to get alongside a wild elephant, one on each side. When level, the nooses were cast so as to lasso the neck. If successful the tame ones were then stopped. At times a very refractory wild one was choked at the sudden jerk, or in its frantic efforts to escape. Altogether it must have been a champion game, requiring an extraordinary amount of courage and skill.

An elephant pit has been the means of securing an individual elephant from time immemorial, and this plan was very probably practised by prehistoric man. One can easily imagine the skin-clad savage peering over the edge of the pit to have a peep at his first captive. One can conceive too his satisfaction later, after a period of starvation and treatment, at finding how simple was the subjugation of the great beast, and to what a number of uses it could be put.

But these pitfalls were horribly cruel things, resulting frequently in fatal injuries to the captive. Think of an immense wild beast of the weight of an elephant falling

into a hole between twelve to twenty feet deep, and not over roomy as regards length and breadth. The curious thing is that so cautious an animal should have become so ready a victim. Before the institution of the keddah operations, a very large number were actually taken in pits.

The hunters certainly exercised the greatest cunning. Well knowing how habitually the elephant uses its trunk to test every suspicious bit of ground before treading on it, they used all kinds of devices to catch their quarry unawares. For instance, a peculiarity of wild elephants is, that they invariably keep to beaten tracks in their journeyings to and fro, and always travel in Indian file. Therefore a pit (or pits) was constructed in the confined portion of a well-known path, or pass. Then the herd was stampeded in such a manner that the elephants were bound to take that route.

Again, jungle-folk noting the partiality of a herd for the particular fruit or leaf of a certain tree, would dig a pit under it before the arrival of the elephants the next season. Sometimes an open pit would be left in a "run," so that in avoiding it the poor beasts would fall into hidden ones constructed alongside.

Altogether it was a very beastly method, especially as the wretched animals were often left for days without being secured. I am happy to think that, so far as I know, the practice has been entirely abandoned everywhere.

Keddah operations are a lengthy business, sometimes taking many weeks of preparation. In some cases indeed all arrangements are made a year or so beforehand, so as to accustom the herds to the existence and appearance of the palisading, etc., in the forest.

The usual method, however, is for the keddah party to assemble in the cold weather in the selected forests, and there await the location of a good herd. On reliable information being obtained the wild elephants are regularly invested,

by sending parties to completely surround them, and prevent any movement to further feeding grounds.

The system sometimes adopted is to divide the party into two, when a mile or so from the herd, one portion going to the right, and the other to the left. Each party drops a couple of men at intervals as guards, who camp where they are, and by their presence prevent the elephants breaking the ring. Meanwhile the leaders of each portion continue to work round the herd until it is entirely enclosed.

This "surround" may be many miles in circumference, for naturally it is desired to alarm the animals as little as possible. The larger the ring the better. The more space there is for the herd, the greater chance there will be that the elephants will remain contentedly where they are. There is one proviso to be noted. Inside this circle there must be plenty of good cover, lots of fodder, and ample water.

As soon as the herd is surrounded the construction of the keddah begins. The site is always selected on a regular elephant "run" or track, and where cover is so thick that the work is not easily detected.

The keddah itself is a "pound" of very strong palisading, consisting of stout uprights about twelve feet high, built in the form of a circle. The diameter of the circle varies according to the strength of the herd to be captured. Sometimes it is fifty, and at others one hundred and fifty yards, or more, in diameter. On one side of the enclosure an entrance of some twelve to sixteen feet is left open.

For this entrance a massive gate is constructed studded with iron spikes on the inside. This gate runs in grooves cut in the solid wooden pillars which flank the opening. When ready it is slung to a cross beam, or from a chain stretched to adjacent trees, and can be let down when the last elephant has entered the keddah, by the simple process of cutting the rope which suspends it.

To guide the elephants to the "pound," as they traverse

the "run " when alarmed by beaters, two lines of strong palisades are erected. These are run out into the jungle on each side of the elephants' track, and diverge from the entrance gate, for a distance of a hundred yards or so, until the ends are about fifty yards apart.

When once the herd has been driven into this funnel, it is usually an easy matter for the beaters to urge them on through the gateway. Occasionally, however, a particularly obdurate female, or a determined tusker, will jib at the entrance, and possibly break back. A pretty awful pandemonium then takes place, and occasionally the whole herd gets away through the beaters, who have to be very nippy to escape being trampled to death.

The next stage, after the gate has dropped behind the tail of the last animal, is to secure the captives. For this purpose tame elephants are employed, and enter the enclosure with a mahout driving each one from his seat on its neck. A man holding a rope squats behind the mahout. One by one the wild ones are separated, and the rope man, slipping off, hobbles the hind legs of each beast with his rope. Sometimes the end of the rope is then firmly secured to a tree, at others the wild one is allowed to tire itself out by trying to move about dragging its hind legs after it.

As soon as time permits, a rope having been secured round the neck, and another round a hind leg, each captive is led outside between two tame elephants, and picketted in the jungle. There it is watered and fed by the men (or man, if it is a small beast) told off to it, who live alongside, just out of reach. In a few days these men will be able to handle their charge and shortly afterwards it will be mounted, and taken out for a walk between two tame ones. So easily are elephants tamed, if properly fed and well treated, that a full-grown female has been mounted and driven without any tame one alongside, within a week of being led out of the enclosure.

Jungle folk will tell you that wild elephants dance at



certain seasons and will declare that they, or their forebears, have actually seen them holding a regular seance! This is to be taken with a grain of salt, though I believe that, in captivity, circus performers are taught sometimes to execute a *pas de seul*! Strange things of course happen. I once missed something very unusual, but what it was exactly I have never discovered.

A tiger had killed a village cow out grazing, and I went to sit up over the carcass. The owner of the dead cow begged me not to have the remains touched as he knew the tiger well, and it was very old, cunning and suspicious. So much so that it would never show itself if it saw the remains had been moved. He added that this tiger always looked up into the surrounding trees before coming for its meal, to make sure no one was sitting up for it!

The carcass was lying on a sparsely wooded slope about two hundred yards below the top of the ridge which was almost a plateau, heavily treed. To humour the old man I agreed not to have the cow touched. The main objection to this was, that near the "kill" the only possible tree was a large pine with no branches whatever until it forked at a height of more than twenty feet from the ground.

My orderly had brought a charpoy\* for me to recline on, and difficult as it was to get it up and affix it, this was child's play compared with the tugging and pushing it took to get me into it. At last, between four and five in the evening, I was comfortably settled with my rifle, blanket, lunch basket, etc., and, as I had decided on an all-night vigil, the orderly and villagers went off to spend the night with the old man. The tiger never came, so when it was dark I went to sleep, waking up just at dawn with a feeling I had heard a noise somewhere. Lying quite still all was silence for a bit, and then came the shrill trumpeting of a wild elephant from near the plateau behind me. Half sitting up and

\* Native bed made of string with wooden legs and side poles.

screwing myself round, I saw beast after beast in Indian file pass slowly and majestically round the corner of the ridge above me into the forest beyond.

"A biggish herd on the move to fresh feeding grounds after watering," I said to myself, and began hunting about in the basket for a spirit lamp so as to make some tea. Long before the water boiled, however, I heard the most extraordinary sounds inside this jungle on the plateau. Apparently the elephants had *not* moved on. First of all there was a great deal of crashing of branches, then a tremendous lot of trumpeting from several old elephants blended with squeals from the youngsters, and finally much stamping which, believe me or not as you like, seemed to my astonished ears to have some kind of rhythm in it.

Long before the stamping began I was wondering how I could get down to see what was happening. I did not like to go without a rifle, and yet it would be all I could do to manipulate that bare trunk myself, without being handicapped by trying to hold a weapon. Then I thought of the stringed charpoy. Whipping out a knife I soon had enough lengths cut and joined with which to lower the rifle carefully to the ground. As soon as it was steady at the foot of the tree I got over the side of the bed and followed. This I did in fear and trembling, for there was nothing to hold on to and the trunk was a huge one.

During the whole of this time the peculiar stamping noise was going on, varied occasionally by a trumpet call. There was no other sign of movement, no more squealing and no more crashing of timber. How I prayed I might not be too late, and how I sweated with funk and anxiety as I swarmed down that tree.

I never thought about the wind. Snatching up the rifle I tore along a small ravine leading upwards from the roots of my pine; horribly breathless at once, as one always is at the first burst in the early morning.

Near the top I peeped over the edge of the ravine but

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could see nothing. Pressing on, I suddenly heard a bolting and crashing noise, and realised that the herd, having got my wind, had gone helter skelter into the thickest part of the forest. I saw nothing but a passing glimpse of one or two broad backs.

Sick as mud I walked slowly on to the top. To my left was about a hundred yards of jungle beyond the edge of which was a grassy spur running down to a small river. It was up a ravine parallel with this spur that the herd had come. Where I stood was a small natural clearing much enlarged by the elephants as evinced by the broken branches and felled saplings all round. These, however, had been tossed clear of the central open space, into the forest beyond. To my right was dense jungle which continued along the plateau in the direction the herd had bolted.

Examining the ground in the clearing carefully, there were deep footprints close to the fringe of the trees. The form they presented was roughly that of a circle. Near the centre of the circle there were still deeper impressions. As I was nearing completion of the examination my Gurkha orderly, Sarabjit, turned up. Together we walked round again. Dreadfully puzzled I asked him what he made of it, explaining about the noises I had heard. Clicking his tongue, as was his wont, he simply said in his own language that the "*hathi log*"\* had been having a *nautch*†. Nothing more could I get out of him.

\* Elephant folk.

† Dance.

## CHAPTER XXII

### HINTS TO YOUNG SPORTSMEN

**M**Y chief aim in this book has been to pass on the knowledge I have gained out shooting. This being so, I feel the work would be incomplete without the addition of as many wrinkles, for the benefit of the novice, as I can bring to mind.

It is quite likely a good many of them have, in some form or other, seen the light before. A small number have perhaps never been printed. All of them are given with the idea of helping the young sportsman to make the best use of his time in the jungle.

In the preceding chapters my endeavour has been to write about each beast or bird referred to in such a way as to interest the beginner. I have tried to create that *longing* for the chase, the pursuit of which will advance so greatly the boy's character, his moral strength, his knowledge of India, and the Indian, and his health.

In this concluding chapter I want to save the novice from shipwreck, and help him to avoid the many pitfalls and disappointments which out shooting confront us all. The hints I give are founded mainly on personal experience, and I trust may be of some use.

During the long period of my sojourn in the East not only did I feel year by year the "Lure of the Himalaya" growing stronger, but I gained much valuable experience.

It is this knowledge, resulting from the actual observation of facts and events, that I am anxious to pass on to the "shikari" officer of to-day, who alas! is not so common in India as he should be, and once was.

As an old shikari myself, I feel the matter deeply, and I am possessed of a great longing, not only to interest those who care for India, but also to help the younger generation to make the best use of their time out shooting. More than that even, for I hope by descriptive anecdote of beast, bird, and event, to give every would-be sportsman the keen *desire* to live the jungle life.

This apathy about shooting was brought home to me when a brigadier, and later when a divisional commander, during the last few years of my Indian career. So long as the war lasted, of course nothing but short leave was possible. After the Armistice, however, when restrictions were withdrawn and still applications poured in for leave to be spent in hill-stations like Mussorie or Naini-Tal, it showed there was something "very rotten in the state of Denmark."

Dancing and poodle-faking are all very well in their way, and boys will be boys, especially when there are girls about. But when the motor bicycle is preferred to the pony, and the dancing-pump to the shot-gun or rifle, then the question becomes serious, and it is a subject for inquiry.

After the Afghan War of 1919, during all my visits and inspections, every C.O. was asked the reason for this extraordinary state of affairs. Especially in the spring and summer of 1920, when leave was freely opened, and Kashmir and the glorious ranges of the Himalayas stood beckoning to the sportsman. Still applications for shooting permits were few, while the dancing halls of the mountain resorts were filled to overflowing, both before and after dinner.

The answers were curious, but not very convincing. One C.O. would say lack of all experience made the boy diffident of starting. This showed rather a lamentable want of initiative on the boy's part, and did not say much

for the right kind of guidance by his seniors. Another would reply that the boys were "infatuated with dancing," which was too sickening when you compared the ball-room with the glories of camp-life. The majority put it down to expense, and said shooting nowadays was so costly that the lads could not afford it. This did not seem convincing either, when you thought of heavy club or hotel bills in hill stations.

As a matter of fact most people with experience of the British subaltern will agree that he can always find a way of meeting any expense, within reason, for an object on which he is dead set. Here the *will* was wanting, and the word "expense" was just used as a handy excuse. Anyhow, I determined to test the matter myself by a three weeks' trip in the hills of the Chamba State during the month of June, 1920.

I found the expenses small, and all my kit was carried by coolies. The initial outlay did not include, of course, weapons, or ammunition, nor was there any railway journey to be paid for.

Out in the wilds I came across two young officers of the Welsh Fusiliers, all the way from Lucknow. They were doing a two months' trip, had secured all the heads they were entitled to, and including rail journey, food, coolies, and rifle cartridges, etc., everything had been met from their pay. This, coupled with my own experience, was quite good enough, so everyone was informed accordingly.

I am in no doubt whatever about this question of expense. I am convinced that in India, shooting is less expensive than the majority of other recreations. The first trip may cost a little more than was contemplated, because experience must always be bought. After that, no one with ordinary care should find himself involved in heavy expenditure.

Just think what is gained. Health, knowledge of the country, knowledge of the native, and knowledge of his many languages. Finally conviction that every day

spent on the hills, or in the jungles, has made the shikari a better and a fitter man. Why? Because all the time he has been learning.

The importance of knowing the language in a country like India can hardly be over-rated. In many a responsible position, and in many a tight place, a good knowledge of the language may just make all the difference.

Yet its acquisition is sadly neglected by old and young alike. At no time is a better opportunity offered than in the jungle. That is why I urge so vehemently—"learn, and keep learning, the language." It is sound advice from every point of view, both of work and of sport.

#### WEAPONS :—

The first thing to consider for Indian shooting is one's battery. Included in the kit of everyone going to India is a 12-bore scatter gun. If a youngster is not given one, then he ought to be; but even if he actually arrives in the country without one, he need not despair. There are plenty of good gunmakers in India, from whom guns can be obtained on very favourable terms. Besides this, the columns of papers like *The Pioneer*, *The Statesman*, *The Civil and Military Gazette*, *The Madras Mail*, etc., are always full of announcements of every kind of weapon for sale.

But every sportsman anxious for success ought to be properly measured for his gun, and get one to fit. When expense is an object, it need not be a first grade ejector hammerless, but it should be a good, serviceable weapon which suits his eye and his build. As regards a rifle, it is of course ideal if he can possess one equally well fitted, but this is not so essential as the possession of a good-fitting gun.

I have had many rifles, both single and double-barrelled, as well as magazine weapons. The first was a single .450, then a double-barrelled .500 Express, both burning black powder. These were followed later by a D.B. .303 cordite rifle by Fraser of Edinburgh, which was the handiest weapon I ever used. Then came high velocity nitro rifles

with tremendous power, and fairly low trajectory. Taking the case of the sportsman who can only run to one rifle, I cannot recommend anything better for general shooting than a double-barrelled .400 cordite rifle by W. J. Jeffery, taking his .450—.400 3-inch cartridge.

The last one I had of this make did me extraordinarily well, and I was extremely sorry to part with it. It helped me, by the aid of some luck, to create a sort of record. *The last eight shots I fired out of it* killed eight animals, namely, two panther, one bear, four ghoral (chamois), and one khakur (barking deer). Its weight (10 to 10½ lbs.) is a bit heavy to carry about in the hills, but it is wonderful how one gets used to it.

It is very nice to have a single barrel smaller bore for stalking in the Himalayas, say, a .360 with an aperture backsight, weighing about 7 lbs. Some sportsmen shoot with a magazine and like it, but I do not recommend it at all, especially for a beginner. *A great deal of harm is done with small bore magazine rifles.* Fellows lose their heads, and fire an enormous number of shots. This is detrimental to their shooting, and very detrimental to the poor game. Unless a vital spot is hit, the animal may easily appear untouched, and get away. Moreover, with so small a bullet, propelled with such high velocity, a very small hole is made. This means that there is very little blood indeed, sometimes none at all.

Again the "stopping" power of a small bore rifle is practically *nil*. When talking about tiger I give a typical instance\* as regards a .303 I have just mentioned. It is not good enough to hunt dangerous game without a weapon capable of administering a "knock-out" blow.

For quick shooting at close range in heavy jungle and for either tiger, bear or leopard, I am very fond of a

\*Page 70.



"lethal" \* bullet in a 12-bore. They have never hurt my gun in the least. From a howdah, however, there is the disadvantage that you may get a quick shot a good deal further away than you expected. I put thirty yards as the limit for a "knock-out" with the "lethal."

I once shot a tigress through the lungs. She then took cover and later charged one of our party who, on his elephant, was moving to a new position. She came quite unexpectedly from behind him with a rush and a roar, but did not charge home. This sportsman, swinging round, got a shot at her with a "lethal" bullet at about fifty yards distance, as she was returning to her lair. We found the bullet afterwards flattened out like a two-shilling piece on the bone of her rump, which it had not penetrated at all. From all accounts this was a very unusual occurrence.

#### PRELIMINARY THEORY AND PRACTICE :—

In India, heaps of books,† guides and other works are

\* The "lethal" bullet was designed by Messrs. Lyon & Lyon, gunmakers, of Calcutta, for use in shot guns. I believe Messrs. Eley Brothers have now secured the sole right of manufacture and sale of this projectile. The principle is thin ribs on the outer surface which fit the barrel without offering any injurious resistance when passing the choke. The solid portion of the bullet is 14 bore. The old 13 gauge ball fitted loosely in the barrel, a great disadvantage and much affecting its velocity, as well as its accuracy. The "lethal" leaves the muzzle, of even a choke bore gun, a perfect sphere. Steel discs are arranged in the interior of the missile to impart greatly increased expansive properties to the leaden bullet, while its large diameter gives excellent shock. It has been used for many years with much success in India. I look upon it as an ideal projectile for quick shooting, especially in heavy jungle or long grass. Many advocate it for night work.

† I can confidently recommend two, which should be in the possession of every sportsman, and to which I am much indebted for some detail, and a lot of measurements in this work. (a) *The Indian Field Shikar Book*, by W. S. Burke. It is full of information and innumerable wrinkles. (Thacker, Spink & Co., Calcutta). (b) *Shikar Notes for Novices*, by the Hon. J. W. Best, of the Imperial Forest Dept. The book is wholly admirable. The author and myself think so much alike on sporting questions, that I trust some day we may meet. (Pioneer Press, Allahabad). Also before going to Kashmir get *Duke's Guide to Kashmir*, a most valuable *vade-mecum*.

now available to help the tyro regarding camp-equipment, shooting-rules, game-laws, good localities for various big game, etc. It is therefore quite unnecessary to enlarge on them here, except to say that camp equipment can easily be gradually acquired in India itself at a very moderate cost; because in that land of constant changes people are continually selling off.

I had done a little shooting in England for three or four years before leaving for India in 1883. Just the sort of rough shooting, as regards a scatter gun, that a boy generally gets. Rabbits in the early morning or evening, or bolting from a ferret. Partridges in the roots and stubble, on rare occasions. Once or twice wild duck on a favourite "reach" near home, and on very rare occasions an occasional pheasant when allowed to walk the "outsides."

This preliminary practice had not done me much good, mainly because I had never been properly measured for a gun. It was not until some years later that I found out what an enormous difference it makes to have a gun fitted to your build, instead of trying to fit your build to the gun!

As regards rifle shooting, I had, from early years, done a good deal of range work, being a constant visitor to the butts of the old Volunteers. I can still remember the awful kick of the Snider, and the delightful change when introduced to the Martini-Henry. This early practice stood me in a good stead afterwards in my military duties, and helped considerably with shikar in India when I once got a decent rifle.

Although in India I have shot a good deal on the plains, the greater portion of my sport has been obtained in the hills. Kashmir I have only once visited, but then for about a quarter of a century my headquarters were situated in Kumaon and Garhwal. This gave me the glorious Himalayan mountains of these two districts at my very door.

**JEALOUSY IN SHOOTING :—**

There is nothing more horrible than the jealous shot.

Avoid him like poison. Example helps in this, as in most things, therefore train yourself not to develop jealousy in any way. I have known of a man who fired twice into a dead tiger, because he hoped to substantiate a claim to the skin by reason of his abnormal bullet.

Unfortunately there are all sorts of jealous sportsmen. Not only the man who wants to claim other people's birds or some one else's tiger, but the official who puts difficulties in the way of everyone. This official, I am convinced, very frequently exists only in the imagination. Personally I have seldom met him, and for one case of official obstruction I could quote a dozen of wholehearted helpfulness. SAFETY PRECAUTIONS :—

With neither gun nor rifle should safety precautions ever be relaxed. One is apt to get careless in India. The country is vast, and there are no boundary fences. You can see for miles and miles in the plains. You shoot much alone, and forget the ordinary precautions you have been accustomed to take in company. The result may easily be sudden death to yourself, your friends, your beaters, or your dog. A man thinks with his gun under his arm or over his shoulder, he can walk along, even when no game is about, and need not be at "safe." Quite all right it may be on a thousand occasions, and then comes the exception. This once came to me.

It was evening time in the hills ; I was tired, and returning to the road after a descent from it of some thousands of feet. My shikari told me to look out, as the place was good for black partridge. Cocking my gun and carrying it under my *left* arm, I continued along the rough path. A big stone causing me to stumble, I put out my right hand against the hillside, but under the stone was a hole into which my foot went. In recovering myself, bang went my left funny-bone against a rock, and my arm becoming quite numb the gun slipped away !

For an appreciable time I looked into the barrels of

that gun only six feet off, and wondered when I was going to be shot, and where. Luckily the rock on which the gun had fallen sloped to the left, and as the stock glided along the rock the barrels turned slightly away. When the butt reached the bottom, bang went the charge, which lodged in the bank two feet from my head.

The gun bounded in the air and fell down the hill a long way. Sending for it, and opening the breech, out flew *two* cases. Closing it again, it did not shut properly, and I found the "lump" of the "grip" was cracked right across. I have just paid thirteen guineas for repairs!

Why I was spared I do not know. It may have been in order to write this book. Anyhow, the incident shows how easy it is to shoot yourself.

A young engineer officer was out shooting near Lansdowne with his two dogs. He sat down for a minute on a fallen tree, putting his gun between his legs with the butt on the ground. One dog, fawning on him, placed his paw on the trigger. The gun fired, and the charge nearly blew off the poor boy's head. His grave is the first one in the Lansdowne cemetery.

A nice little Gurkha bugler borrowed my second gun for a Sunday's bird shoot. He winged a plover, which ran hard, with the boy after it. The latter stumbling over a rock, fell down flat. Away went the gun muzzle towards the bugler, and off went the charge into his upper arm near the shoulder. So close, too, that his coat was singed.

His two pals carried him back to barracks and I, having heard about it, went to hospital about 8 p.m. to see him. I found the little fellow in the operating theatre, under an anæsthetic, with our splendid doctor hard at work. It was a horrible wound in the cup of the shoulder, and so large after being cleaned that a boy's fist would have gone easily into it.

I asked the doctor if he thought it possible to save his

arm, and shall never forget his strained look as glancing up at me he snapped out :

“ Save his arm, sir, I shall be damned glad if I save his life ! ”

The doctor (Chambers\*), however, was no ordinary man. He gave the case such skilful and unremitting care that he saved not only the boy's life, but his arm too. The latter was rather shrivelled, and could not be raised above the horizontal, but its owner remained a bugler, and did not have to be invalided.

Just before leaving India I was inspecting at Ferozepore, one of the stations in my division. A much respected artillery major had been buried that morning. He was very fond of shooting, and the day before had taken out with him a young subaltern newly joined. Approaching a boggy ford to get to their ground, and going along a track in single file, the major, turning his head, told the boy to take out his cartridges. The latter had a hammer gun, and to do so let down the hammers. The left one slipped and the full charge entered the major's back.. He died at three o'clock next morning in great agony.

H. and I were shooting quail in some corn fields. We warned the reapers, and thought all was clear. Suddenly, as H. was letting off at a bird, up jumped a villager about forty yards off in the direct line of fire. He got 38 pellets plump in the face, which was soon pouring with blood from forehead to chin. As he was standing, cursing H., his wife ran up, and in her grief and sorrow threw herself on to him, resting on his hip with her arms and legs clasping his body. Her moans and cries were most piteous, and altogether it was about the most beastly situation I had ever been in.

We got him away at last and sent him to hospital, much against his wife's will. He made out he was stone blind, and we thought it could hardly be otherwise. By a mar-

\* Captain R. Chambers, I.M.S., 7th Gurkhas, now principal Amritsar Medical College.

vellous streak of fortune the M.O. found he had not been hit in either eye by a single pellet. He made a rapid and complete recovery.

I was shooting snipe two years ago with one of my staff near Belgaun in the Bombay presidency. We were walking a wet bit of low weeds about fifty yards broad, in line. On each side was long grass on the edge of which we walked, with two coolies in the weeds. My companion was on the right, and we had both lost a good few birds in the grass. I had just dropped a bird to the left, when another snipe got up at the shot and flew to the right, rather close to the line. Swinging round I got him, and at the same time saw my staff officer was right ahead of the line, and apparently in the line of fire as I pulled the trigger.

To my dismay he dropped his gun and bending down put his handkerchief to his face. Rushing across the water, I found one pellet embedded in his eyelid. It appeared that on killing a snipe, and sick of losing his birds, he had run on ahead to pick it up himself. Hence his position. Fortunately the only result was a black eye, but his wife, I could see, was very angry with me when we got home.

I quote these incidents as a warning to the novice. Facts are convincing, and when a man is convinced he is impressed.

So strongly do I feel in this matter that I wish the following injunction could be printed on every permit, licence, shooting rule, etc. :—

*In no circumstances whatever shall a licence-holder allow his gun, loaded or unloaded, to point at a man, woman, child or dog.*

Dozens of times, too, have I known a gun "let off," both from a howdah and on *terra firma*, with a very narrow squeak for somebody.

There have, of course, been occasions when a gun has been "let off" on purpose! A certain sportsman with a new shooting once arranged a day for pheasants with

five guns, including himself. One gun failing, he asked a neighbouring farmer he had never met to join them. The farmer turned up with a very serviceable-looking weapon. Walking to the first beat the farmer "let off" his gun twice from his shoulder. First one and then another of the guests had sudden and important business at home, until only the farmer, his host and one guest were left to commence the shoot.

They had an excellent day, and the farmer shot splendidly. In the evening his host asked him how it was that such a good, and evidently experienced shot, had let his gun off twice on the way out.

"Well," said the farmer, "it's this way. I know this shoot well. It is an excellent one for three, but no good at all for five!"

Sometimes the matter of compensation for peppering a native is easily adjusted. Many years ago a well-known Indian cavalry officer (Prinsep \*) and a friend, Captain X., were out shooting quail one morning near Cawnpore.

X. loosed off at a low-flying bird, but as luck would have it, some of the shot found their way to an old woman who was sitting in the line of fire admiring the beauty of the dawn. There was immediately a great commotion, the victim shrieking that she was entirely killed, and calling on all her gods to avenge her. Poor X. was offering all the excuses and condolences he could think of, and wondering what he should do next, when Arthur Prinsep arrived on the scene.

When the lady stopped for breath Prinsep observed calmly: "Give her four annas a pellet. I *always* give them four annas a pellet!"

When this was explained to the old woman, she not only ceased her lamentations, and gladly accepted the

\* Colonel Arthur Prinsep, of the 11th Bengal Lancers, a great character, and hero of the well-known story about the late King Edward, when Prince of Wales, and his first tiger, which I related in *Under Ten Viceroy*s.

proposal, but took a leading part in the "counting over," and in the discovery of pellets in regions which in any decent map of her anatomy would have been marked "unexplored" or "inaccessible!"

The two morals of this story are that (1) all's well that ends well, and (2) that it is never too late to mend.

#### SIGHTING OF RIFLES :—

Fellows are wonderfully casual about the sighting of their rifles. Many will take any sighting given them. I knew quite an oldish man who bought a D.B. high velocity rifle with the back sight only about six inches from the breech. The consequence was that when he wanted to "draw a bead," he had to force his head right back to see his sights. For howdah shooting and for those who object to the "aperture" the best backsight is a shallow notch fairly wide. Far the best foresight is a bead one of ivory. Many men say the "aperture" requires a bit of knowing. For hill work and stalking there is no better sighting. A friend of mine, Sir John Goodwin, used nothing else during his last five years in India, and swears by it, especially for galloping shots. If sighting is not satisfactory, many disappointments will occur, and the right focus is absolutely essential.

#### UPHILL AND DOWNHILL RIFLE SHOTS :—

These require a good deal of care, and some practice is recommended. Downhill is the harder, and a very "fine" sight is needed. As regards "uphill," although it might be thought a full sight was essential, I have found just the opposite the case.

#### LOW TRAJECTORY, HIGH VELOCITY, SMALL BORE RIFLES :—

A word of warning is necessary regarding these on the plains. One has to be very careful as to what kind of background exists behind the quarry. If there is a possibility of cattle or villagers being within 3,000 yards or so, and there is no natural bullet catcher on the other side of the animal, the shot should not be taken.



Innumerable cases of fatal accidents have occurred, therefore the risk is not good enough. Only a year or two ago (1920) a political friend of mine, who is a careful and experienced shot, killed a woman when firing at a black buck. The case was, of course, settled out of court, but although the compensation paid to the relations was so liberal as almost to induce them to plant their women folk about in the cultivation in the hope of a repetition, still the tragedy deeply affected my friend for many months.

Even in the hills, where natural bullet-stoppers abound, great care is required. In the summer many cattle are taken for grazing to the higher slopes, and sometimes get on to the game areas. I once had an unpleasant experience regarding a stray bullet which has been recorded when talking of *ghoral*.

#### TARGET SHOOTING :—

It is a very good plan to do as much target shooting with a rifle as possible. Although it by no means follows that the good *target* shot will be a good *game shot*, I have never known anyone not improved by letting off his rifle at a mark on every opportunity.

The late Hercules Ross, of the Indian Civil Service, and Commissioner of Kumaon in the late eighties, than whom there was no better judge, gave me this tip and thoroughly believed in it. He helped to found one of the first rifle associations in India, formed after the Mutiny to encourage good marksmanship, especially amongst civilians. It was named "Northern India Rifle Association," and so beloved by Herky that he called his second daughter "Nira."

Herky was my shikar mentor in the beautiful forests of the Kumaon Tarai; showed me my first tiger, took me up to my first sambar, saw me miss my first swamp deer, and abused me roundly for shooting my first chital with horns in velvet. I owe to his memory more than I can say.

**GRALLOCHING :—**

On one occasion, having shot two *khakur* (barking deer), and both the orderly and myself being tired, we cleaned out the entrails to make the loads lighter. One I had shot through the throat, and he bled very freely. Now those *khakur* were better eating than any we had ever tasted before, and the one with the bullet through the throat was the better of the two. After this I always had the throat cut, the entrails taken out and emasculation performed, on any animal we meant to eat.

Natives are not keen about this, and there are many reasons. Mohammedans, of course, will always harlal\* (*i.e.*, cut the throat) any animal not quite dead because their religion prescribes it, and they cannot touch the flesh otherwise. But the entrails they make use of in many ways (as do all races), so they do not want to leave them in the jungle. Up to the time of my discovery I had nearly always shot with a Sikh or Gurkha orderly who, being Hindu, did not approve of throat cutting. The Gurkha, moreover, asserted that to do so spoilt the flavour of the meat. Finally, if the animal gralloched has to be man-handled to camp, there is much more blood with which to stain the clothes.

**MOVEMENT :—**

Remember it is nearly always *movement* that gives you away in the jungle. Always bear this in mind, and steel yourself to keep rigid. Look at the true jungle man to see how still he keeps when watching, and how absolutely rigid he becomes at the psychological moment.

**NOISE AND TALKING :—**

More is lost than sportsmen ken by quite unnecessary noise and talking. Get into the habit, when anxious to speak or to ask a question, of saying to yourself :—

“Is this question urgent, or will a sign do, or can it wait ?”

\* *Harlal Karna*—to make lawful (for food).

## LOOKING FOR GAME :—

Make frequent halts of short duration and look all round, even if lynx-eyed jungle folk are beside you. This habit, like so many others, needs to be acquired.

## ABOVE YOUR GAME :—

In the hills always get *above* your game when stalking. Animals are usually looking *down*, and generally expect danger from below.

## WIND :—

Study wind, and remember to work accordingly. Mr. Best, in his book I have mentioned, has much sound advice to give about it. In the hills it is a very difficult matter, for the wind may vary in every valley. The best plan is to continually lick a finger all round, and then lift it up. The chilly side will tell you from which point the wind is blowing.

Not that this is infallible. In very cold places it is often difficult to say which *is* the chilliest side! Sir John Goodwin always carried a small piece of cotton wool, or a few very light and small feathers. When dropped to the ground these gave a true indication, and the ready way this wrinkle was adopted by experienced shikaris proved its worth.

## BE READY ALWAYS :—

Acquire too the habit of being always ready. When tired or bored remember this, and keep alert. One of the finest sportsmen I know (Colonel Sir H. B. Thornhill) often said :

“I wonder how much I have gained by being always ready !”

This of course includes utmost rapidity in reloading the moment your rifle or gun is empty.

## THE SECOND SHOT :—

With dangerous game always put in a second shot. It may save your life. Anyhow it may prevent you losing your quarry. Don't think of the skin, but concen-

trate on making a dead certainty. This is also particularly applicable to hill shooting, when you have wounded, but have not killed.

**BEATING :—**

Whatever game you are beating for, always think of the probable line the animal will take. Let that be your leading principle, and arrange yourself and your friends accordingly. This is so often neglected by sportsmen, who let the shape of the ground, convenience, and the advice of perhaps an ignorant shikari carry too much weight. Mr. Best says aptly :—

“ But the main thing to remember, and never to be dissuaded from by the most persistent villagers, is that *you cannot beat an animal the way it does not want to go.*”

**ABDOMINAL WOUNDS :—**

These have been referred to as regards tiger and leopard. With other game, if you know it is an abdominal wound, or see the entrails hanging out, always wait. The animal, if undisturbed, is sure to lie down. If followed up at once, especially in the hills, he may rush off, without giving a shot, and get right away into inaccessible ground.

**EARLY RISING :—**

For stalking, and for birds you are not beating (snipe excepted), you need to be out before dawn. In my opinion, for animals you cannot be out too early, if you move with caution. This, too, in spite of the old Indian adage :—

“ The evening best for animals, for birds take early dawn.”

Of course luck is an enormous factor and modifies so much of one's advice ! I have known men in camp who never got up early, and yet obtained a better total bag in the same shoot than the energetic and keen shikari who rose every day at 4 a.m. Still, I am sure I am right in advocating early rising for the stalk. I know that I always saw more, and shot more, in the first hour after dawn than in any other hour of the day. Sir John Goodwin I know agrees with me. In fact, he goes further and says :

"For myself I have *never* yet known the late riser make a bag."

#### CARRY YOUR OWN RIFLE :—

Hundreds of chances have been lost, splendid chances too, because the rifle was not to hand. That fine shikari, General Sir Bindon Blood, so wonderfully successful in his sport, invariably carried his rifle himself, however long the distance, and however hot the day. It was the irony of fate that once when I was with him in Central India, he missed a fine chance, through no fault of his own, but by not having his rifle with him. We had just got into tea when a man ran up to the tents to say a leopard was near the entrance to camp. Sir Bindon, calling for his orderly and rifle, ran on ahead to the spot, and actually saw the leopard within easy range. Before the orderly arrived it had disappeared.

#### LONG SHOTS :—

Young sportsmen are apt to take very long shots. Partly from ignorance, and partly from intense desire to get their trophy, such shots seldom come off, are very disturbing to the game, and very likely to spoil any chance later on, or on another day. Further, one may wound and never know it, so try and avoid them.

#### HINDS AND DOES :—

It should hardly be necessary to warn the novice never to shoot at hinds or does. Yet I mention this, for I have known the rule transgressed in spite of a warning on the shooting permit. However excited a man, unaccustomed to shooting big game, may be on sighting his quarry, there is no excuse whatever for pulling at an animal without antlers or horns. In cases where both sexes are horned, it is usually quite easy to distinguish the female. In addition there is the Indian guide, shikari, or orderly to consult. At the same time he is not always reliable, especially if meat is scarce. If there is any doubt, it is

much better to forego the shot altogether, than afterwards suffer the shame and humiliation of shooting a doe or hind; to say nothing of the bad example set. As experience is gained, there is never any difficulty in distinguishing the male. Even if you only see his *face* through glasses, it is enough.

#### SUSCEPTIBILITIES, ETC., OF INDIANS :—

To have a pleasant shoot, to enjoy yourself, and to keep everyone happy and contented, it is most important not to wound the susceptibilities of the folk of the country, or commit any breach of common Indian usage or practice, whether religious or secular.

For instance, a Sikh won't touch tobacco, and therefore you should not give him your pouch and pipe to carry. The first time I shot with a Sikh orderly, Fattah Singh, I did not know this, and suffered accordingly. I had filled my pipe while shooting snipe in about six inches of water. Wanting both pockets for cartridges, I called out "Fattah Singh," and chucked him the pouch to put in my cartridge bag. Seeing it coming, he held out his hands, but realising what it was just before it reached them, he withdrew his hands quickly, and the pouch fell into the water! I was inclined to be very angry until a brother officer told me the reason. I had to go then and fish out the pouch, and there was no more smoking that morning.

Never shoot monkeys or dogs, and avoid firing within a quarter of a mile of any house, village or temple (Hindu—*Mandir*; Mohammedan—mosque or *masjid*). Pea fowl are generally sacred, and should not be shot unless right away in the jungle, or you are assured by the shikari or beaters that there is no objection. Wild pig are eaten by many classes of Hindus, and the flesh much esteemed, but do not offer any to a Mohammedan, or expect him to touch the animal. The bull and the cow are very sacred to Hindus. Be very careful not to wound their feelings in this matter, though I can tell a tale to show the mentality

of Hindu villagers as regards any care or real feeling for the animal they so deeply reverence.

I was returning to camp in my howdah when, on the outskirts of a village, I passed a big cow lying down, chewing the cud. She was horribly emaciated and evidently unable to move. But the worst part was that two jackals were actually *eating her hindquarters*. Sending for the head-man of the village, I asked how long she had been lying there like that, and he said perhaps a week. Telling him about the jackals, which could be seen slinking away, and ordering him to put her out of her misery, the man became most impertinent. He said he would do nothing of the sort, that the village was a Brahman one and the cow sacred, which I ought to know very well. After some attempt to bring him to reason, but without success, I shot the cow and left him.

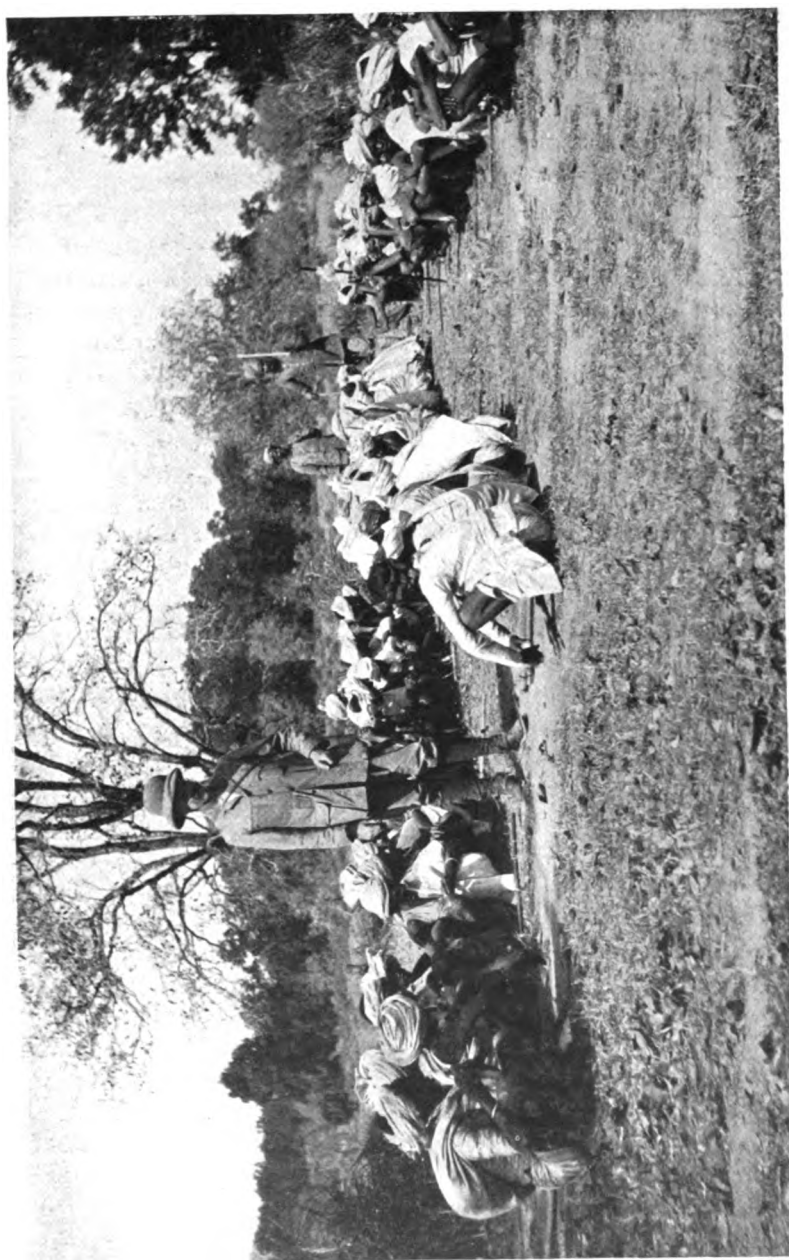
I reported the matter at once, in writing, to the Collector, and got a very nice letter from him in reply. When thanking me for what I had done, he added that he was taking steps to have the head-man adequately punished. But this is typical of the absolute disregard for animal suffering by so many Orientals, and especially by the Brahman.

It is opportune to mention here the advisability of always reporting any unusual occurrence at once to the nearest civil officer. This is especially necessary in the case of altercation or trouble, or impending trouble, with natives.

#### BEATERS (COOLIES).

*Always pay these yourself.* Do not leave it to a shikari or any servant. I reproduce a picture of that fine sportsman, Sir John Goodwin, paying his beaters in the Central Provinces. The whole illustration is worth noting, for it is so typical of the right method of doing things in the jungle; a method which will repay you a hundredfold. The beaters themselves look happy, and Sir John's attitude shows he is on the best of terms with them.

Pay them *at once*, too. Do not keep them shivering



*To face page 34.*

SIR JOHN GOODWIN PAYING HIS BEATERS IN THE CENTRAL PROVINCES.





about or waiting for ages with nothing to do. Whether it is a matter of coolies, cartmen, beaters, or hired transport, pay on the nail when the service is completed.

The sportsman will find also that it repays him to carry a supply of country tobacco, and a few thousand cheap cigarettes for occasional distribution. It has an excellent effect on the beaters at the end of the day. Just a "smoke" to each beater as he gets his pay. They tell all their pals, and the next time you want beaters you get them.

Plenty of small change should also be taken. It is far better to give each man his exact wage than to chuck out a rupee, here and there, to be divided amongst four men. Your servant can always procure any amount of small pieces for you the day after your payments, by going to the nearest food or grog seller.

#### **STUDY :—**

Shooting needs study like every other recreation. No boy would dream of playing cricket or football without knowing the laws of the game, yet the majority in India take up polo or shooting in the most light-hearted manner, without any attempt to learn the rules. There are heaps of books on shooting, and many on natural history. They are most interesting to read, and equipped with knowledge the youngster will find the enjoyment of his sport enhanced so much, that he will soon find himself desirous of knowing more.

#### **THE BRITISH SOLDIER :—**

One often meets the British soldier out shooting. Help him all you can. As a rule he works hard for his sport, and does not get very much. Sometimes he is short of bread, butter, meat, tea or cigarettes. He will seldom ask for anything, but additions to his larder are generally welcome. Talk to him about his sport, and give him assistance to obtain it. He may have shot a doe for the pot, but you must not be too hard on him for that. At the same time there is no harm in pointing out the bad

example it is to the natives of the country. This appeals to him more than any other argument.

GRADUATION :—

The young shikari must graduate. As regards small game, he will probably begin on snipe, duck, partridge and quail. If he is an absolute beginner, he must not be discouraged should his expenditure of cartridges be out of all proportion to his bag. It will come in time as he gains confidence. My advice is "Blaze away, and do a lot of thinking."

As to big game, *black buck* and *chinkara* can be obtained almost everywhere if an effort is made to find them. They afford excellent practice in stalking, learning about wind, judging distance, sighting, taking the shot, care of the rifle, etc. But before starting on the bigger adventures of *tiger*, *bison*, *mar-khor*, *ibex*, etc., still more knowledge is required for success.

To gain this knowledge and experience I recommend chital shooting on the plains, uriyal in the Punjab Salt Range, and ghoral in the hills. All three give excellent shikar training for a small expenditure of leave (*i.e.*, ten days) and money. Chital can be found in most jungle districts, a trip to the salt range is a delightful holiday, and the pursuit of *ghoral* is a grand test of endurance and activity. Incidentally a panther may be encountered and possibly bagged on these excursions, thereby giving more experience still to the beginner.

THE END

## INDEX

- Abazai, 214  
 Abbottabad, 175, 176  
 Abdominal Wounds, 87, 307  
 Abdulla Khan, 73  
 Accidents, shooting, 208-301  
 Afghanistan, 174  
 Afghan War, 292  
 Agra, 209  
 Almora, 17, 105-6, 131-2, 144-5,  
     148, 154, 212-13, 220  
 Alwar, 73  
 Amballa, 165, 218, 225  
 Ammon, *see* Nyan  
 Ankus, 250  
 Anson, Mrs., 283  
 Antelope, 152  
 Aperture sight, 303-304  
 Apperly, Capt. Henry, 192  
 Ashurst, 221  
 Asian, The, 35  
 Assam, 144, 148, 246  
 Astor, in Kashmir, 167, 170,  
     172, 174  
 Atkinson, Mrs., 13, 15  
 Athlone, Duke of, 263  
 Atta (flour), 247  
  
 Baber, Sir, *see* Shum Sher  
 Baker, Sir Samuel, 38, 39  
 Baker-Carr, Capt., 149, 150  
 Baldacha, *see* Thornhill  
 Baldwin, Capt., 37, 39  
 Balrampur, elephant, 272  
 Baltistan, 174  
 Baluchistan, 167  
 Bandobast, 19  
 Bangalore Volunteers, 277  
 Banteng, 144  
 Bannu, 174  
 Barasingha, 157, 158  
  
 Bareilly, 47, 207  
 Bargasten, cliffs, 191  
 Barhel, 168-195-196  
 Barking Deer, *see* Khakur  
 Bashahr, 197  
 Bateman-Champain, Arthur, 133  
 Beans, pass of, 148  
 Bears, 129  
     and locusts, 132  
     bad sight, hearing, 133, 134  
     brown, length of fur, 138  
     being killed by, 131  
     mauling natives, 139  
     smacking buttock and shoot-  
         ing, 140  
     two in one shot, 142  
     vitality after wound, 133  
     wind right, 134, 306  
 Beaters, 310-11  
 Beating in general, 307  
 Beatty, F. M., 119  
 Bees, attacks by, 257-259  
 Belgaum, 301  
 Best, Hon. J. W., 296  
 Bettiah, 61, 265, 264  
 Bihar, 21  
 Bison, 143  
 Bhabar pass, 191, 195  
 Bhowali, 104  
 Black-buck, 162-164  
 Blood, Sir Bindon, 15, 19, 40, 72,  
     73, 74, 104, 139, 163, 308  
 Blue-bull, *see* Nilghai  
 Boar and Tiger fights, 110-111  
 Bog (phassaned), 260, 262  
 Bombay Nat. Hist. Socy., 172  
 Boucher of the Hampshires,  
     21-22, 103  
 Books on Shooting, 296  
 Brahmans and cows, 310

- Brahminy duck, 227  
 British Soldier, 311-12  
 Broun, J., I.C.S., 15-21, 236  
 Brown, and his mar-khor, 173  
 Brown, Moray, 38-39  
 Buffalo, 143  
 Bullet, out of shot cartge., 133  
 Burke, W. S., his book, 296  
 Burma, 143-275  
 Bustard, 236  
 Buzzards game destroyers, 237  
 Cabul, variety of Mar-Khor  
     horn, 170, 172  
 Calcutta Derby Sweep, 55  
 Calf, shooting one, 120  
 Campbell, Sir John, 19, 20,  
     23, 40, 77-79, 142  
 Campbellpur, 167  
 Capercaillie, 238  
 Carnivora, Handbook to the, 35  
 Castle Rock, 192  
 Cawnpore, 302  
 Central India, 72  
 Chakrata and man-eater, 109  
 Chamba State, 134, 293  
 Chamba Rajah, 23  
 Chambers, R. (I.M.S.), 300  
 Chara for elephants, 247  
 Charpoy, or Indian bed, 288  
 Chaupatti, 215, 247  
 Cheetah, 162-163  
 Cheshires, 2nd Bn., 193, 220  
 Chini, a stage on H-T road, 192  
 Chinkara, ravine antelope, 164  
 Chir, a Himalayan pheasant, 243  
 Chisholm, Col., 5th Lancers, 33  
 Chital, the spotted deer, 159-160  
 Chitral, 211  
 Chitawan, a valley in Nepal, 9  
 Cholera in Nepal, 1905, 150  
 Chukor, 211-213, 239-240  
 Civets as game destroyers, 237  
 Clavicle, or floating bone, 265  
 Cobra and King-cobra, 219-222  
 Cockerell killed 191  
 Coffin, Edward, 61  
 Collier, Bertie, 49  
 Comb-duck or Nukta, 229  
 Cooch-Behar, late Maharajah  
     of, 149  
 Cooper, Robert, 119-121  
 Coot, a water fowl, 228  
 Cord, stout for hill climbing, 138  
 Cow, the sacred, 310  
 Crane (Koolan or Kunj), 232  
 Crimson-horned pheasant, 241  
 Cromer, The Lady and her  
     record chital, 159  
 Cubs, *see* Tiger  
 Curzon, Lord, and the big  
     rhino. horn, 149  
 Dalhousie, the hill station, 122,  
     149  
     Lord, Governor-Genl., 192  
 Dankar, Capital of Spiti, 200  
 Datia, Maharajah's big tiger,  
     15  
 Datt, Hindostani command to  
     elephant, 76  
 Davis, A. P., 22, 186, 212  
 Deer, distinct from antelope, 152  
 Delhi, 219, 236  
 Dera Doon, 84  
 Dera Ismail Khan, 273  
 Destroyers of game, 237  
 Devices for night shooting, 90  
 Dharma pass into Thibet, 148  
 Dixon, E., and a big tiger, 15  
 Does, *see* Hinds  
 Doon, The, for shooting, 48, 159  
 Dopping-Hepenstal's tiger, 53-4  
 Doraha, for duck, 225  
 Downhill shots, 303  
 Driving birds, 210-12  
 Duck of all Kinds, Chapt. XVII  
 Duke "Guide to Kashmir," 296  
 Durand, Sir H., and where  
     killed, 273  
 Eagles as game destroyers, 237  
 Early rising, 233, 307  
 Eastern Bengal, 148  
 Edward VII., and "rings," 56  
 Edwardes, M. and tiger, 55-56  
 Elephant and bees, 257  
     anecdotes, Chapt. XX

- Elephant—  
 age, 272  
 Balrampore fighting, 272  
 brain of, 275  
 bogged, 260-262  
 bolting, 251-254  
 captive, Chapt. XIX  
 caught in Keddahs, 283-287  
 caught by noosing, 283  
 crossing a river, 127  
 daily ration, 247  
 dance, 287  
 fear of dog and pig, 251-252  
 height of an, 272  
 herds, 277  
 killed by author, 261  
 mast, 262  
 memory of an, 274  
 military employment of, 273  
 mauled by tiger, 77, 266  
 on the sea, 268-271  
 "pad," 250  
 pits, 284  
 "raw" on head, 250, 265  
 rogue, 275  
 shot by Sir J. Campbell, 79  
 spoor of an, 276  
 stamping on dead game, 119  
 staunchness of an, 274  
 tusks of an, 272  
 tuskless male, 117, 276  
 unsteady at shot, 75, 76  
 watering twice a day, 276  
 Ellis, Col. C. C., and shoot, 20  
 Evans, G. P., and tusker, 272  
 Expenses of shooting, 293  
 Fagu, a stage on H-T road, 191  
 Falcons as game destroyers, 237  
 Farquharson, killed by bear, 131  
 Fatteh Singh and tobacco, 309  
 Faunthorpe, a tiger shot, 100  
 Faussett-Godfrey, Capt., 9  
 Felis Uncia, snow leopard, 114  
 Ferozepore, a sad tragedy at, 300  
 Fletcher, F. W., tiger slayer, 38  
 Florican, 236  
 Forman, Col. D. E., and a  
 stirring adventure, 97  
 Forsyth, Capt., tiger-slayer, 37  
 Fraser, Sir S. M., 282  
 Fraser, gun makers, 196  
 Gadwall, The, 229  
 Game animals of India, *see*  
 Lydekker  
 Game destroyers, 237  
 Gandak River, 61  
 Ganges River, 96  
 Gargeney, *see* Blue-winged teal  
 Garhwal, District of, 22, 175  
 Gaur, *see* Bison  
 Gayal, *see* Mithun  
 George V., in Nepal, 9, 10  
 Ghara, young buffalo, 46  
 Ghoral, 185-188  
 Gibson, killed by bear, 131  
 Gilgit, 174  
 Glossop, Col. B. M., 189  
 Goats, 170, 172, 189  
 Godfrey Faussett, *see* Faussett  
 Gond, *see* Swamp Deer  
 Goodwin, Sir John, 9, 40, 41,  
 139, 159, 171, 172, 303,  
 306, 307  
 Goona in Central India, 72  
 Goose, grey and bar-headed, 226  
 Gordon-Canning, 68, 69  
 Gordon Ramsay, 18  
 Gralloching, 305  
 Guides, Cavalry, 214  
 Gujah Shikaris, 73  
 Gulel, a two-stringed bow, 209  
 Gurkhas as shikaris, 43  
 Gwaldam, in Garhwal, 154  
 Gwaja pass, 261  
 Hamadryad, snake, 221  
 Hamilton, Hubert, 205  
 Hardinge, Lord, 253  
 Hardwar, 253  
 Harlal, to cut throat, 257, 305  
 Haridas, shikari, 195, 203  
 Hawker, Peter, 19  
 Hazara for Mar-Khor, 174  
 Heads, restrictions, 152, 179  
 Hewett, Sir John, 13, 14, 15,  
 17, 18, 39, 40, 79, 83

- Highlands of Central India,  
     by Forsyth, 37  
 Hill, General W., 222, 268-271  
 Himalayas, 191, 297  
 Himalayan pheasants, 238  
     snow-cock, 240  
 Hindostani-Thibet road, 191  
 Hog-deer (parah), 161  
 Horse, climbing a tree, 83  
 Houbara (bustard), 236  
 Howdah (words "datt" and  
     "myal"), 76  
     Lowis' double-seated, 267  
     snap shots from, 76  
 Hugli river, 270  
 Hume and Marshall's book on  
     birds, 223  
 Hutchinson, Miss, 221  
     Lt.-General H. D., 140.  
 Hyana, 128  
  
 Ibex, 157, 170, 196, 312  
 Imam Pyari, elephant, 262, 266  
 Indian duck and their Allies,  
     by S. Baker, 223  
 Indus river, 216  
 Inverarity, J. D., 36  
*Indian Sporting Magazine*, 38  
 Irriwaddy, 247  
  
 Jackals as game destroyers, 237  
 Jarao, *see* Sambar  
 Jealousy in shooting, 297  
 Jeffery, W. J., his rifle, 295  
 Jenkins, Herbert, 44, 45, 179  
 Jerdon's game birds, 223  
 Jhula, a rope-bridge, 201  
 Jongpen, a Thibetan official, 144  
 Jungle fire, 253  
  
 Kabul, river, 216  
 Kadar of the Ganges, 236  
 Kafir Kund, 177  
 Kajnag, 176, 177  
 Kali, a female elephant, 267, 268  
 Kalij, Himalayan pheasant, 243  
 Kashmir, 157, 175-179  
 Keddah, 283, 285-287  
 Keepers' adage, 242, 243  
  
 Keppel, Sir Colin, 9  
 Kennard and tigress, 15  
 Khabar, 47  
 Khakur, or barking deer, 153  
 Khairna, 155  
 "Kill," and a light, 52, 90  
     covered with leaves, 27  
     forest, 46  
     how eaten by carnivora, 30  
     how tiger kills prey, Chapt. III  
     moving it, 51  
     natural, 46  
     tied up bait, 46  
 King, His Majesty and Ruler  
     of Nepal, 8  
     one day bag, 10  
     total bag, Nepal, 1911, 9  
 Kipling, J. Lockwood, 248, 268  
     Rudyard, 129, 252, 268  
 Koolan, *see* Crane  
 Kraite, a venomous snake, 221  
 Kulu district, 134  
 Kumaon, King of, 16, 17, 56,  
     89, 106, 132  
     province, 105, 108, 132, 175,  
     189, 297, 304  
 Kunj, *see* Crane  
 Kyang, the wild ass, 206  
  
 Ladak, for wild yak, etc., 144  
 Laddie, Gordon setter, 239, 242  
 Lahoul, for shooting, 193  
 Language, importance of, 294  
 Large and Small Game of Ben-  
     gal, by Baldwin, 37  
 Lang, Col. E. and chukor, 211  
 Langur, a grey monkey, 107  
 Lansdowne, Garhwal, 90, 281  
 Lascar, native sailor, 271  
 Lawrence, Sir A., killed, 191  
     Aleck, Commissioner, 263  
 Leather, Mr., killed, 191  
 Leh, for shooting, 176  
 Legend Garhwal village, 186-8  
 le Mesurier, A., his book, 223  
     Colonel, horse killed, 191  
 Leopard, *see* Panther  
     clouded, 83  
     snow, 114

- Leopard—  
     tree-climbing, 83, 127  
 Lethal bullet, 62, 296  
 Letting off a gun, 301  
 Lion, *see* Tree-climbing, 83  
 Literature on sport, 296, 311  
 Locusts and bear, 132  
 Long shots, 308  
 Low, General Sir R., 83  
 Low trajectory, *see* Rifles  
 Lowis, Jack, 10, 21, 31, 40, 47,  
     62, 65, 66, 68, 71, 80, 82,  
     112, 261, 262, 264, 266-68  
     Mrs., 9, 47, 265, 266  
 Ludhiana, 218, 219  
 Lydekker and his book, 35  
 Lynx, habits of, 163  
     picture of, 164  
 Machan, 28  
 Mackenzie, Lady, 17  
 Mackinnon, V., 48, 159, 272  
 Macpherson (I.C.S.), 26  
 Maha, *see* sambar  
 Maharajah, The, Prime Minister  
     and Marshal of Nepal,  
     9, 10, 150, 151  
 Mahouts, dread of wild ele-  
     phants, 278  
 Mainwaring, Mrs., 282  
 Makna, tuskless male, 117, 276  
 Male animals, spotting them, 308  
 Maler, swamp in the Doon, 84  
 Mallard, 227, 228  
 Man-eaters, Chapt. VIII  
 Manchurian tiger, 58  
 Mangal Khan, 23  
 Mansorawar Lake, 148  
 Markham, A. M., 161, 255-257  
 Mar-Khor, horns interlocked, 171  
     climbing a tree, 83, 171  
     Lord Kitchener's, 173-174  
 Martini-Henry, 70, 194, 196, 297  
 Martins as game destroyers, 237  
 Mast elephants, 262-266  
 Master-stag, 160  
 Meerut, 95  
 Meston, Lord, 17  
 Milam, 145-148  
 Minniken, forest officer, 197,  
     205  
 Mithun (smaller gaur), 144  
 "Modern Pig-sticking," *see*  
     Wardrop  
 Mohan pass, 163  
 Monal, Himalayan pheasant,  
     241-242  
 Mongooses, 237  
 Morang snows, 192  
 Morley, Lord, 144  
 Mornaula, 105  
 Moulmein, 247  
 Mouse-deer, 153  
 Movement in jungle, 305  
 Mozi nullah, Kashmir, 176  
 Muggins and elephant, 252  
 Muktesar, 106  
 Muntjac, *see* Khakur  
 Musk-deer (Kasturi), 161  
 "Myal," *see* Howdah  
 Mysore, 253  
 Nachar, a stage on road, 197  
 Naini Tal, 104, 109, 155  
 Nanda Devi, 169  
 Narkat, 55  
 Nash of Gwaldam, 154  
 Natives, reports by, 42  
 Nautch (dance), by elephants,  
     289-290  
 Nawabs, Nowshera, 216-218  
     of Rampur, 263  
 Nepal, camp arrangements, 150-1  
     shoots, in, 150  
     the Prime Minister, *see* Maha-  
     rajah  
     Resident, now Envoy, 53  
 Nets for tiger, 63  
 Nichol, Charlie, 117, 118  
 Nigel Woodyatt, Capt. 2nd  
     Goorkhas, Dedication and  
     65, 68, 159  
 Night-shooting devices, 90  
 Nilghai (blue-bull), 165  
 Nogri, a river in flood, 199  
 Noise when stalking, 305  
 Nuttal, Col. Joe, 21, 103, 104  
 N.W. Frontier, 214-18



- Nyan (wrongly called Ammon), 157-166
- "Old Shikari," 129
- Oriental, The, his politeness, 156
- Ormsby, Brig.-Genl. V., 130
- Osmaston, B. B., 109, 110, 279, 280
- Ovis poli, 166
- Owls as game destroyers, 237
- Pad elephant, 250
- Pandit, A. K., 145
- Panther (or leopard), Chapt. IX., 113
- abdominal wound, 87, 307
- amazing quickness and power of concealment, 117
- and a light over "Kill," 52, 90
- and a hyana, 128
- call, 125
- cat and mouse game, 121
- climbing trees, 127
- do not like swimming, 127
- eating victim's entrails, 30
- 114, 115
- examples of boldness, 115, 126
- good sized one, 113, 114
- man-eater, 126-127
- Parha (hog-deer), 161
- Partridge, black, 233
- grey, 234
- various, 234
- Pathli Doon, 13
- Patterson, A. B., 11, 12, 29, 30, 119-121, 161, 233, 254, 263, 264
- Lt.-Col. Stewart, 157, 166, 175
- 176
- of Tslavo, 83, 105
- Peacock, 116
- Pemberton, Mrs. John, 17
- Peshawar, 216, 224
- Pheasants, crimson-horned, 241
- Himalayan, Chapt. XVIII
- western-horned, 241
- Pierson, Lt.-Col. R. A., 38
- Pilaw, 215
- Philibit, 23
- Pink-headed duck, 231
- Pintail duck, 230
- Pioneer, The*, 148, 151, 294
- Pochard, golden eyed, 231
- proper, 230
- red-crested, 231
- tufted, 231
- white-eyed, 231
- Poison grass, 197
- Poli, *see* Ovis
- Preservation of game, 17, 237
- Prey, how killed by tiger, Chapt. III
- Prince of Wales in Nepal, 150
- Prinsep, Arthur, 302
- Prichard, Major W. O., 177
- Psychology of the tiger, Chapt. II
- Punjab and seese, 234
- salt range, 167, 312
- Pur camp, 96
- Pustirang pass, 168
- Python, a big serpent, 219
- Quail shooting, 232, 233
- Quetta, 170-2, 211, 240-1
- Rakh of grass, 46
- Raldang, snow-peak, 192
- Ramnee in Garhwal, 239
- Rampur in Bashahr, 197
- Ramsay, Jack, 218
- Ramsay, Sir Henry, *see* "King of Kumaon"
- Rangoon, 247
- Ranikhet, 155
- Ravine deer, *see* Chinkara
- Rawalpindi for Kashmir, 175
- Ready, be always, 306
- Reading, Lord, 192
- Rebsch, Miss, killed, 191
- Record heads, 152
- Rhinoceroses, 148-50
- Regi, near Quetta, 261
- Rifles, '303, and big tiger, 69
- '280 Ross and "she" bear, 136
- care and carrying, 70, 308
- for buffalo, 143
- low trajectory and high velocity, 303

- Rifles—**  
 magazine, 295  
 regulations, 70  
 sighting of, 303  
 small bore and stopping  
   power, 64, 295, 296  
 target shooting, 297, 304  
 "Ringing," a tiger, 55-57  
 Robson, Capt., 205  
 "Rohilla," *see* Markham  
 Roorkee, 163, 283  
 Rose, Colonel Hugh, 110,  
   144-148, 186, 188, 212-214  
 Ross, Hercules, 17, 40, 52, 60,  
   75, 89, 109, 154, 159,  
   180, 278, 279, 304  
 Ruddy Sheldrake duck, 227  
 Rumbir Singh Rajah, 23, 159  
 Russell, Sir Baker, 201  
 Samander, shikari, 26, 29, 30,  
   43, 48, 49, 84, 102, 103,  
   125, 128, 257, 258  
 Sambar, 154-156  
 Sanderson, G. P., 34-37  
 Sarabjit, orderly, 43, 93, 95, 105,  
   125, 128, 140, 141, 156,  
   184, 189, 257, 258  
 Sarao, 188-189  
 Sawaliks, 281  
 Scinde, Frontier Force, 103  
   province, 234  
 Second shot, The, 306  
 Seely, Major, and a Kraite, 220,  
   221  
 Seesee, a partridge, 234  
 Shabkadr, 216  
 Shapoo, *see* Uriyal  
 Sheep, wild, Chapt. XIII  
 Sheringham, Major, Chapt. XV  
   and XVII  
 Sherpur, 23  
 Shikar Book, The Indian Field,  
   *see* Burke  
   notes, *see* Best  
   sketches, by Moray Brown, 38  
 Shillingford, F. A., 35, 44  
 Shot-gun, 294  
 Shooting in England, 238  
 Shots, up and down hill, 303  
 Shoveller duck, 228  
 Shum Sher, General Sir B., 9, 150  
 Shuttleworth, Digby, 127  
 Sidhpur, 191  
 Sighting rifles, *see* Rifles  
 Sikhs, 45, Mess, 166  
 Sikkim, for Nyan, 166  
 Simla, 191  
 Sirus, 232  
 Sitting up over a kill, Chapt. VII,  
   89  
 Small change for beaters, 311  
 Small game shooting, Chapt. XVI  
 Smith-Dorrien, Sir Horace, 9  
 Snakes, 220-222  
 Snap-shots from howdah, 76  
 Snider, 109, 297  
 Snipe, 224, 226  
 Snow-cock, 240  
 Solon, 193  
 Spiti, Chapt. XV  
 Sport in the Nilgiris, 38  
 Spot-bill duck, 229  
 Sporting trips of a Subaltern,  
   by Glossop, *see* Glossop  
 Spotted deer, *see* Chital  
 Spurrel, Major, 33  
 Srinagar, Kashmir, 175  
 Stag, *see* Kashmir stag  
 Steele, Major Charles, 42, 44, 121  
 Steel-tipped bullets, 147, 278  
 Stopping power, small bores, 295  
 "Stops," when beating, 50  
 Stuart Baker and Bird Book, 223  
 Study for shooting, 311  
 Subatha, 140  
 Suleiman mountain, variety mar-  
   khor horn, 170  
 Sunderbuns, 148  
 Susceptibilities of Indians, 309  
 Sutherland, A. M., 31, 48, 117,  
   280  
 Sutlej river, 191, 192, 199  
 Sven Hadin, 176  
 Swamp-deer (gond), 158, 159  
 Swifts, shooting, 209  
 Talking when after game, 305

- Tarai Kumaon, 17, 24, 25, 60, 77, 109, 111, 154, 159, 297, 304  
 Nepal, 9, 10, 55, 57, 139, 149  
 Target shooting, 304  
 Taroos, 63  
 Teal, 230  
 Teck, Duke of, 180  
 Thar, 180  
 Theog, a rest house, 191  
 Thibet, 144  
 Thikana, 25-28  
 Thornhill, Charlie, 210  
     Cud, 210  
     Sir H. B., 40, 207-9, 224-5  
 Tiger's age, 13  
 Tiger, abdominal wound, 87, 307  
     and boar fighting, 110, 111  
     approaching its "kill," 28  
     big bags of, 10, 20  
     biting its own foot, 98  
     "calling" season for, 125, 126  
     Campbell's hat-trick with a, 20  
     cat and mouse action of a, 121  
     cavern-bred, 58  
     climbing trees, 83  
     cubs and number born, 31, 32  
     dislocating neck of victim, 44  
     eating entrails, 30  
     haunts, 46  
     light over "kill" of a, 52  
     man-eaters, Chapt. VIII, 102  
     measuring a dead, 13, 14  
     methods of awarding trophy of a, 111-112  
     porcupine kills a, 53; quill in foot and leg of a, 104  
     record, 12-15  
     ringing a, 55-57  
     roaring, 29, 30, 125  
     shooting cubs of a, 81  
     sitting up for a, Chapt. VII  
     slayers, Chapt. I  
     stalking a, 52  
     stories of, Chapt. V  
     toothless, 13, 104  
     tree climbing by a, 83, 127  
     vitality of a, 86  
     average weight, 14  
 Tigress, average length, 15, 16  
     protecting her cubs, 80-82  
 Timber yards and elephants, 247  
 Trackers in the jungle, 277  
 Tragopan, horned pheasant, 241  
 Tsine, *see* Banteng  
 Tuck, Lt.-Col. C. H. A., 3rd Gurkhas, 106  
*Under Ten Viceroy's*, 239, 248, 302  
 Unusual occurrences out shooting, 310  
 Uphill shots, 303  
 Uriyal (shapoo), 157, 167, 312  
 Ursus Isabellinus, 129  
     Labiatus, 129  
     Malayanus, 129  
     Thibetanus, 129  
 Utta Dhora pass, 145, 148  
 Van Ingen, taxidermist, 183  
 Vultures, 188  
 Ward, Rowland, 15, 31  
 Ward, Lt.-Col. A. E., 18, 22, 157  
 Wardrop, Maj.-Gen. A. E., 96-100  
 "Wangtu," a pony, 202-204  
     Bridge, 191  
 Waterfowl, *see* Duck  
 Wazir Khan, a sportsman, 23, 24  
 Weasles as game destroyers, 237  
 Welsh Fusilier subalterns, 293  
 Western-Horned pheasant, 241  
 Whymper, S. L., 18, 19, 212  
 Widgeon, The, 30  
 Wigram, Major H. R., 176  
 "Wild Beasts and Their Ways," by S. Baker, 38  
 Wild dogs, 237  
     goats, 170 *et. seq.*  
     sheep, 166, *et. seq.*  
 Wind, 306  
 Wolseley, General Sir G., 224  
 Wolves, 237  
 Woodcock, 141, 23, 239  
 Wynaad, 38  
 Yak, 144-148  
 Youngster's exploit, Chapt. XV  
 Zerghum, mountain near Quetta, 171







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